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MEMOIRS

OF THE

COURTS

OF

BERLIN, DRESDEN, WARSAW,
AND VIENNA,

IN THE YEARS 1777, 1778, AND 1779.

By N. WILLIAM WRAXALL, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

THESE Memoirs were originally collected, with a view to publication; but, a reluctance to the disclosure of anecdotes and facts relative to so many distinguished living characters, induced me to postpone the accomplishment of my intention, to a distant period. The lapse of more than twenty years has fully emancipated me from those restraints; the decease of the King of Poland, and of the Archduchess Christina, both which took place during the course of last year, having withdrawn the only remaining impedi-

ments to their appearance. The deposition, added to the misfortunes of Stanislaus, rendered him peculiarly sacred; and had he been still alive, I should yet have delayed publishing these Memoirs.

However remote the time may appear since they were written, I have still chosen to be wholly silent on many points, equally curious and interesting. The personages themselves, to whom that remark applies, are either dead, or forgotten; and motives of respect induce me to let them remain in oblivion.

In unveiling the errors, or disclosing the foibles, of Princes and of Ministers, we must consider them as incident to the frailties and infirmities, inseparable from human nature. But, their greatest faults will be obliterated, when compared with the atrocities,

cities, and contrasted with the excesses, of the present self-created Sovereigns of France.

How moderate will appear the ambition of Joseph the Second, in the affair of the Bavarian succession; and how mild must be accounted the most despotic acts of Frederic, towards the Saxons, or the Poles; on a comparison with the flagitious enormities now committed, under the banner of Liberty and Equality, in Switzerland, in Rome, and in Piedmont! Even in their most arbitrary proceedings, Joseph and Frederic respected the rights of human nature, of religion, and of nations. In the conduct of the "Directory," we experience their emancipation from all restraints of private honor, of public faith, and of moral obligation. They have made the best apology for despotism, as well

as for superstition ; and have compelled us to look back with envy or regret, to ages of the earth, which the philosophy of the present time has endeavoured to represent, as only deserving of oblivion, or worthy of compassion.

CHESTERFIELD STREET,

BERKELEY SQUARE,

April 2, 1799.

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MEMOIRS, &c.

LETTER I.

Anecdotes of Frederic the Second, Landgrave of Hesse.—Hanover.—Electress Sophia.—Sophia Dorothea, Princess of Zell, wife to George the First.—Relation of the principal circumstances attending her imprisonment, and the death of Count Konigsmark.—Examination of that transaction.—Particulars of the last illness and death of King George the First.

HANOVER, Sept. 9, 1777.

THE line of inquiry and research which you so warmly recommended to me at my leaving England, is undoubtedly far more interesting, as well as important, than the description of palaces and cities. But, it is likewise more difficult, and in some respects I might add, more invidious. Kings and ministers are neither

as accessible as the buildings they inhabit, nor can we wish to speak of them while alive, with the same freedom. “Periculosa plenum opus Alexæ, historiam sui temporis scribere.” Even Burnet and Clarendon, who wrote of the events of their own times, did not escape the penalty inseparable from such an attempt. I am however, on the other hand, sensible, that it is only from cotemporary authority we can derive the most authentic, as well as curious materials of history. The minute and personal anecdotes of illustrious men soon fade under the touch of time, and are obliterated. In order to be preserved and transmitted to posterity, they must be collected at the moment. The letters which I propose to address to you, from the various courts which I may chance to visit while on the continent, will therefore be directed, though not exclusively, yet in a peculiar manner, to that object. If sometimes, when surveying scenes or countries remote from the common track, I may seem to deviate from my
original

original design, the digression will only be short.

I shall pass over the time that elapsed between my landing at Calais early in July, and my arrival at this place, as furnishing little towards my present design; and I shall therefore, neither detain you at Antwerp, at the Hague, nor on the Rhine. Remounting that river from Dusseldorf to Mentz, I crossed the dominions of Hesse, to Cassel. The Landgrave may be accounted one of the richest, as well as most powerful Princes of the German Empire, after the temporal Electors: the Dukes of Wirtemberg and of Mecklenburg Schwerin alone, among the Princes of the second order, can contest with him in extent of territory, in revenues, and in political importance.

Frederic the Second, reigning Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, is at this time about fifty-seven years of age, of a middle size inclining to robust, and of a manly figure. Over his uniform he usually wears the

Order of the Garter ; but, his treatment of the Landgravine his first wife, who was a daughter of George the Second, did not tend to cement the alliance which he had formed with the King of Great Britain. They were separated from each other during many years. The infelicity of his first nuptials, has not however prevented him from contracting a second marriage, as soon as the necessary forms of decorum permitted. Captivated by the attractions of the Princess of Brandenburg Schwedt, he espoused her about four years ago. She is a collateral descendant of the Prussian House, and is still at this time a very beautiful woman. But, the Landgrave seems either not destined or not calculated, for matrimonial happiness. They live in a state of alienation and estrangement, in the same palace and capital, without issue, or almost intercourse of any kind.

For this domestic misfortune, he consoles himself in the society of Mademoiselle F——, whose personal charms are pointed
by

by all the fascinating coquetry of a Parisian education. She was mistress to the Duke de Bouillon, and arrived here only three months since. Two thousand Louis-d'ors were allowed her, for the expences of her journey from Paris to Cassel; and her actual establishment falls little short of six thousand pounds a-year. As if all these remunerations were below her merit, she is treated with still more flattering marks of distinction. At the public theatre her box is placed close to the stage, in a conspicuous part of the house. I saw her there last night, when the Landgrave and Landgravine were present at the performance. This contempt of decency, so repugnant to our manners, is not uncommon in the German Courts, and derives a sort of sanction from custom.

Cassel is in many respects a beautiful city, and embellished with some magnificent buildings. Hanover presents the image of departed greatness; palaces without inhabitants, a capital without trade, and an

Electorate without a Sovereign. It is principally by the recollection of what it was, that Hanover continues to interest an ordinary traveller. To an Englishman it offers many curious subjects of reflection, connected with history. I study the local scenery with pleasure; nor have I been less attentive to collect some of the anecdotes, which tradition still preserves relative to the Electoral Family. At the palace of Herenhausen, yesterday, a grey-headed domestic of fourscore, pointed out to me the precise spot in the gardens, where the old Electress Sophia, wife of Ernest Augustus, dropped down and expired. That event happened in the beginning of June 1714, not eight weeks before the death of Queen Anne. "I perfectly remember," said he to me, "the evening, which was uncommonly serene and fine. The Electress appeared to be in perfect health, notwithstanding her advanced period of life. She had dined in public; and, invited by the beauty of the weather, walked out, accompanied

“ accompanied by the ladies and principal
“ persons composing her court. Suddenly,
“ without any apparent cause or attack,
“ she exclaimed, ‘ It rains ! it rains ! ’
“ and running across the garden, she soon
“ sunk down, close to a little alcove about
“ two hundred yards from the palace,
“ where in the space of a few minutes she
“ breathed her last without pang or ef-
“ fort.”

Her destiny was a very singular one. The youngest daughter of the exiled and unfortunate Elector Palatine, King of Bohemia ; brought up in adversity and privations ; married to a German Prince of the family of Brunswick, who had then no prospect of becoming the head of his House ; called in the evening of life, by a wonderful concurrence of circumstances, to the English succession, from which she was apparently removed by her birth to an incalculable distance ; surviving that event above thirteen years, and at last carried off by death, at the very moment when she

must have ascended the British throne: such were the outlines of her history. We know, that though above eighty at the time of her decease, she felt none of the infirmities of age; and that far from regarding with indifference the crown which awaited her, she anticipated with anxiety the accomplishment of so great an expectation. It would have been a singular spectacle, to have beheld the grand-daughter of James the First quitting Hanover at more than fourscore years of age, embarking for her new dominions, and assuming the reins of government, at a time when other princes are usually incapacitated for all the functions of royalty.

My researches have however, been more particularly directed to another Princess of the Electoral Family, less generally known than Sophia: I mean, the wife of George the First; for she was never acknowledged as Queen of England, or even as Electress of Hanover. She is in fact only remembered by some imperfect traditions of her gallantry

lantry and her misfortunes. The greater part of her life was passed in a sort of melancholy sequestration, at the Castle of Ahlden, in the Duchy of Zell. As only persons of inferior condition were admitted to see her, during the residence which she made there, it is very difficult to ascertain with certainty the principal circumstances of her history. Even relative to the charge of infidelity brought against her, it is not easy to support by facts any decided opinion. Her innocence is matter of inference and belief, more than of positive proof. I have conversed with many persons who recollect her death, though scarcely with any who ever saw her. On the nature of her connection with Count Konigsmark, and on the particulars of his *disappearance*, I have in a peculiar manner endeavoured to obtain accurate information. But, over this transaction so mysterious a veil has been drawn, that no cotemporary testimony or evidence, on which implicit reliance can be placed, is now to be procured.

cured. The Court of Hanover, as might naturally be expected, was desirous to suppress as much as possible, every thing relative to the Princess and her pretended lover. Even the name of Konigsmark was not mentioned without repugnance, till within the last twenty years.

Various portraits of Sophia Dorothea, the wife of George the First, still exist in the palace here at Hanover, as well as in that of Herenhausen. I have studied them with attention : and if I were compelled to name any person now living, to whom they bear a particular resemblance, I should say it was to the celebrated Mrs. Draper, better known under the name of Sterne's "Eliza ;" but, the Princess was unquestionably by far the most beautiful of the two women. In a very capital picture of her, which struck me yesterday at Herenhausen, she appears to be in the bloom of youth. The contour of her face is more round than oval, the features regular, and their expression gay, pleasing, and animated. Her
eyes

eyes are hazel, and her brown hair plays negligently over her forehead. The painter has dressed her in a lilac-coloured vest richly embroidered, which is closely fitted to her body, and calculated to display the delicacy of her shape. Over her left shoulder is buckled a blue mantle, adorned with flower-de-luces; and behind her stands a negro girl, who holds out to her a scarlet riband. This portrait was probably done soon after her marriage in 1682, when she was about seventeen, and cannot be considered without emotions of concern for her subsequent fate. I shall now endeavour to throw together the most material facts relative to her, which I have collected at various times, here, as well as in other parts of the empire. They will serve at least to give some general information, on which to form an opinion respecting that unfortunate Princess.

Her father, George William, Duke of Brunswick Lunenburg and Zell, was an elder brother of Ernest Augustus, Duke of Hanover,

Hanover, who married Sophia, daughter of the King and Queen of Bohemia. George William was one of the most distinguished Princes of his time, and not less known by his talents for war, than by his political abilities in peace. He checked the career of Louis the Fourteenth's arms, at a moment when they were every where victorious, by defeating Marshal Crequi at Confarbruck, in 1675, and by taking him prisoner afterwards in the city of Treves. In the decline of life, his profound judgment, added to his zealous protection of the Protestant Religion; rendered him the oracle of all the adherents to that faith, and the declared enemy of France. It was to the Duke of Zell, that William, Prince of Orange, usually had recourse for advice, in great or delicate emergencies; and before he ventured to embark for England in 1688, on the expedition against James the Second, he consulted George William in person. A range of rooms in the Castle of Zell, is still called the Prince of Orange's apartments, from having been frequently inhabited

inhabited by him, and appropriated to his use. Even in the act of succession, which called the House of Hanover to the British throne, William was unquestionably actuated in part by friendship for the Duke of Zell; whose descendants, immediate and collateral, were thereby eventually raised from German Princes of the second order, to the rank of Kings.

George William, after having passed the meridian of life in celibacy, became at the age of forty, deeply enamoured with Eleanor Desmier, a young lady whom he saw by accident at Breda in Holland. Her father, Alexander Desmier, was a French gentleman, of antient and honourable descent, Lord of Olbreuse in the province of Poitou. Being a Hugonot, he had quitted his native country, on account of the persecution to which he was liable for his religious opinions. If we may believe tradition, Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse was not so dazzled with the conquest which her charms had effected, as to forget the disproportion

proportion of rank and birth between her and her lover. She did not yield to his addresses, till convinced by time, of the sincerity, as well as the warmth of his affection. In the marriage contract, she was qualified "Countess of Harburg;" it not being in the Duke of Zell's power, according to the forms of the German jurisprudence, to elevate her to the dignity of a Princess of the Empire, though he could make her his legitimate wife. But, at his solicitation some years afterwards, the Emperor Leopold raised her to that eminence, and she was then universally recognized as Duchess of Brunswick-Zell.

Sophia Dorothea, the only issue of George William by Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse, was born in 1666, and at an early age was promised in marriage to Augustus Frederic, son of Anthony Ulric, Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbittel. But, this young Prince, who excited great expectations, was cut off when only nineteen, having died in consequence of the wounds which he received

received at the siege of Philippsburg in 1676. Ernest Augustus, Duke of Hanover, presumptive heir to his brother George William in the Duchy of Zell, as a masculine fief; was likewise desirous of securing the allodial or personal inheritance of the elder branch of his family. He demanded therefore, the Princess Sophia Dorothea in marriage for his eldest son George Louis, Hereditary Prince of Hanover. The Duke of Zell consented to the proposal; but, it is universally asserted that neither the Duchess his wife, nor the young Princess herself, submitted to it without great reluctance and considerable opposition. The nuptials were nevertheless solemnized in November 1682. In the following year she brought into the world a son, who was afterwards King George the Second. His birth was followed by a daughter, who by her marriage with Frederick William the First, became Queen of Prussia.

But, the union of the Princess of Zell with the Hereditary Prince of Hanover, though

though fruitful, was by no means happy. It is difficult to know whether their infelicity resulted from natural incompatibility of character; whether it was principally produced by neglect on *his* part; or whether it arose from *her* heart being preoccupied by a passion for another person. The Court of Hanover was at that period, one of the most splendid, gallant, and polished, of any in the German Empire, or in the North of Europe. Ernest Augustus himself avowedly maintained a commerce of gallantry with the Countess of Platen, a woman of beauty and accomplishments, whose influence over him was in many respects almost without bounds. His son, the Hereditary Prince, imitated the example set him; though he preserved for his wife, and manifested towards her, sentiments of respect and consideration. She seems on her part to have been a high-spirited woman, of strong passions, capable of the most violent resolutions; and not sufficiently circumspect in her conduct, whatever might be the purity of her intentions,

intentions, in a situation where calumny might so easily find subject for attack.

Among the strangers of distinction who visited the Court of Hanover, was Count Konigsmark, a man whose crimes, adventures, and tragical end, have rendered him too much known. He was by birth a Saxon, though his family was originally from Sweden. Handsome in his person, captivating in his manners and address, he was formed to succeed with women. He had been early known by, and peculiarly acceptable to, the Princess of Hanover, before her marriage, when she resided at Zell in her father's palace. It is even pretended, that she had retained a deep impression of this partiality for the Count, which naturally revived on seeing him again. Konigsmark, whatever personal or external graces he possessed, was unquestionably a dissolute, unprincipled, enterprising man of pleasure, capable of the greatest crimes in the pursuit or attainment of his views. He had travelled over Europe,

rope, had seen service in various countries, and distinguished himself by his gallantry, magnificence, and courage. In Spain, where he had displayed his address on public occasions, he was honoured by as public testimonies of attachment, on the part of the ladies of the Court of Madrid. When in England, under the reign of Charles the Second, he narrowly escaped an ignominious execution, for the murder of Mr. Thynne, in 1682. His accomplices, for it is impossible to doubt that he employed or suborned them, though the fact could not be judicially brought home to him; were all executed at Tyburn, for that atrocious act. He himself was reserved for a destiny hardly less unfortunate, a few years later; and his name is now inseparably connected with the Princess of Hanover, Sophia Dorothea.

The Prince her husband, who served during more than one campaign, in the Imperial army against the Turks, was frequently absent from her; a circumstance which

which naturally facilitated Konigsmark's access to the Princess. It is unquestionable that she entertained for him sentiments of the most partial nature, and that she indulged them in a manner, which, if not criminal, was at least imprudent. She was accustomed, two or three times in a week, to feign an indisposition, under which pretence she retired to her apartment. Konigsmark was then admitted; they supped together, and usually remained at table, or in conversation, till two or three o'clock in the morning. When he retired, he descended by a little private staircase, near the great gate of the Ducal Palace, which conducted him into the town.

Interviews of such a nature, at such hours, and in the Princess's own apartments, imply great, and one may add, improper intimacy, particularly, if Konigsmark's profligate character be recollected. It is even difficult at first sight, not to connect with them the idea of a criminal connection. But, on the other hand, there

is neither any proof that they were so in effect, nor was any such proof ever attempted to be made out against her, though her enemies were deeply interested to establish the fact, if it had been possible. In addition to this negative presumption in her favour, it is positively asserted that, during the time when Konigsmark was with her, they never remained alone together; one or more of her ladies of honour, and those of the most unimpeached characters, being always present. The very imprudence of admitting him to such interviews, seems to prove that they were innocent, since it was impossible that they could be altogether concealed or unknown.

Unfortunately, Konigsmark's person and accomplishments had made an impression not only on the Princess, but on Madame de Platen, mistress of Ernest Augustus. Whether, as is pretended, he had divulged the favours which she conferred on him; or whether he had returned her partiality with indifference and contempt, as other persons

persons assure, it is certain that she deeply resented his behaviour. Irritated at his preference for the Princess Sophia Dorothea, of which she was well apprized, and having set spies to watch his motions, she soon discovered his secret interviews with her rival, of which she gave information to the Duke of Hanover. It was natural to suppose that he would not tolerate them; and the Count soon afterwards received an indirect, but peremptory intimation, that his longer stay at Hanover would be displeasing. As he delayed compliance with the injunction on various pretences, it was reiterated. He therefore made public preparations for his departure, fixed the day and hour, ordered his post-horses, and having commanded his servants to expect him at three o'clock in the morning, he went privately to the Ducal Palace. The Princess, under pretence of indisposition, admitted him as before to her apartment, where a supper was served, and they remained

mained for some hours together, but, always in company with one or more of her ladies.

No sooner was the Countess of Platen apprized that Konigsmark was in the Princess's chamber, than she instantly carried the intelligence to the Duke, and represented to him the insolence of thus braving, if not dishonouring him in his own palace. Profiting of his indignation, she induced him to give directions for punishing the Count's temerity, by an act of immediate violence. It is doubtless to be lamented, that Ernest Augustus should have sanctioned or authorised an assassination; for such it must be deemed: but, it should likewise be remembered that he was a Sovereign Prince, and the provocation was great, if he really believed Konigsmark's visits to his daughter-in-law to have been of a criminal nature. No appeal could be made to his son, who was absent in Hungary, and the Count was on the point

point of leaving Hanover. How far these considerations may seem to palliate the act, I leave others to determine.

A very general idea prevails throughout Germany, that Ernest Augustus having caused four of his guards to put on masks, they by his order attacked Konigsmark, as he came out of the Princess's apartment, and killed him on the spot. I saw this very morning, the place in the Electoral Palace, where tradition says the Count fell. It is a passage almost destitute of light, not above nine or ten paces in length. A door at one extremity opens into a large handsome apartment, the first of the range occupied by the Princess of Hanover, and out of which Konigsmark passed, when he quitted her on the night that he perished. At the other end is another door, near a staircase, by which he was to have left the Palace. That this was the scene of his seizure, there is no doubt; but, the means used to put him out of life were more secret, though not less effectual, than open attack.

attack. I shall relate them from good authority.

Orders were issued on the part of the Duke of Hanover, to the soldier on guard at the Palace gate, to stop Konigsmark, as he came down the private staircase beforementioned ; to force him by menaces of immediate death to follow, and then to shut him into a subterranean vault or cellar, which was indicated. The soldier punctually executed the commission, without knowing or suspecting the consequence. It would seem that the Count neither made nor attempted resistance ; a fact which proves either his want of courage, or of any means of defence ; unless we suppose that, confiding in his innocence, he took no precaution for his security, and was unsuspicious of an intention to interrupt his passage out of the Palace. The vault into which the unfortunate Konigsmark was forced, could at pleasure be filled with water, by means of a pipe. It was in fact a reservoir, and no
sooner

sooner was he shut up, than they immediately let in the water, and drowned him. His body on the ensuing morning was put into a heated oven, and the mouth of it bricked up, as the most effectual means of concealing the whole transaction.

But, though the precise nature of Königsmark's death might not be immediately divulged ; his disappearance, and the anxious inquiries of his servants, who after vainly seeking him through the city of Hanover, went to the Ducal Palace, in order to obtain intelligence of his fate, soon betrayed the secret. It was speedily conveyed to the Princess, who well-knowing the implacable enmity of Madame de Platen, made no doubt that the Count had fallen a victim to her vengeance. Far from submitting tamely to the power of Ernest Augustus, she abandoned herself to the most immoderate transports of resentment and indignation. Neither his authority, his presence, nor his menaces, could subdue her spirit. She treated him as a monster
and

and an assassin, declared that she would no longer remain among barbarians and murderers, and even appeared ready to make some attempt on her own life, in the violence of her despair. After so public and so scandalous a breach, it became impossible to conceal, or to pass over the affair in silence. Ernest Augustus ordered the Princess therefore, to be conducted to the Palace or Castle of Ahlden, some leagues distant from Hanover, where she was retained in a sort of honorary confinement. Two ladies and a chamberlain were named to attend on her, and to compose her household. This whole transaction took place in 1686, at a time when Konigsmark was about thirty-one years old, and when Sophia Dorothea could not have been twenty-one.

How far the Duke of Zell her father approved or condemned the conduct of Ernest Augustus his brother, does not appear; nor, if known, would it form any ground on which to infer with certainty

his daughter's innocence or criminality. That her husband, the Prince of Hanover, was in no manner acquainted with, or privy to the death of Konigsmark, is clear to demonstration; since it was a sudden act of resentment, and he was absent in Hungary. He even submitted with considerable reluctance to the Duke his father's desire, that he should renounce the Princess for ever. Ernest Augustus exacted of him that mark of obedience, if not of approbation. In December 1694, a sentence of *separation* was pronounced between the Prince and Princess. But no *divorce*, in the most extensive sense of the term, as totally dissolving the marriage between them, and enabling each party to marry again, ever took place. Sophia Dorothea continued to reside at Ahlden, till the death of her father-in-law, the Duke of Hanover, which happened in 1698; and from the time of her being first transferred thither, to the end of her life, she was commonly known

known under the name of "Princess of Ahlden."

After the decease of Ernest Augustus, George, then become Elector of Hanover, made propositions to the Princess, for an oblivion of past animosities, and for a reconciliation. It is difficult to say whether a conviction of her innocence, a sentiment of affection, or motives of interest and policy, were most prevalent in this proposal. But, it is certain that she rejected the offers, and replied, that "nothing could induce her to live in a family of assassins." A fact much more incredible, but which rests upon the strongest evidence, is that after the death of Queen Anne, when the Elector was called to the throne of Great Britain, he renewed his proposals for the same purpose. A deputation, composed of English Peers and Gentlemen, by the new King's desire, waited on Sophia Dorothea at Ahlden, and acquainted her that they wished to be permitted to approach her as
their

their Queen. They represented to her the injurious consequences which her separation, and her state of misintelligence with the King her husband might produce, peculiarly to her son. And they reminded her that for slighter causes, the birth of James the Second's son had been called in question. Far from yielding to these arguments, or being dazzled by the prospect of a crown, she peremptorily rejected the overture: "If," said she, "I am guilty of the crime imputed to me, I am unworthy to be your Queen. If I am innocent, the King is unworthy to be my husband." A woman capable of such a renunciation, must either have been animated with implacable resentment, or have been conscious of her own innocence, and of the malignity of her persecutors. Of the fact I have seen and heard such proofs, as it seems impossible to call in doubt.

Sophia Dorothea, during her confinement at Ahlden, was treated with every
mark

mark of respect due to her rank. The two ladies of her household, the chamberlain, and the officer who commanded the guard, constantly dined at her table. She was allowed to go in her coach, to the distance of a league from the Castle. Persons of inferior condition, workmen, and tradesmen, had free access; but no man or woman of consideration was allowed to approach, or speak to her. After Ernest Augustus's death, who was her declared enemy, she might have obtained, if not her liberty, at least an alleviation of the restraint and privations imposed on her. But she disdained to make any application for the purpose. By the concurring testimony of all persons, she bore her misfortunes with dignity and equanimity; never vented herself in reproaches against those who had injured or oppressed her; and preserved the cheerfulness of a mind serene and innocent, in the midst of her hard condition. Even her beauty remained in a great degree unimpaired, to a late period of her life.

Blondel,

Blondel, who was the French Minister at the Court of Hanover from 1715 to 1726, a period when she was still living, and who had every opportunity of informing himself of the particulars of her history, confirms all the principal facts which I have enumerated respecting her. In a very curious account which he drew up of the whole transaction, he declares that he derived his information relative to Sophia Dorothea, from the mouth of the second Countess of Platen, mistress to George the First. Blondel protests likewise, that he had himself seen the very soldier of Ernest Augustus's guards, who shut Konigsmark into the reservoir; and who assured Blondel, that he should never forgive himself for having had any share in so abominable an act. "Such," adds he, "was the uniform gaiety and serenity of the Princess's temper during her residence at Ahlden, as to impress universally with a conviction of her possessing a quiet conscience. Those who saw her, if they judged from
" appear-

“ appearances, would even have supposed
“ that she was not discontented with her
“ situation and fortune.”

In 1705, her father George William Duke of Zell died, at above eighty years of age, and she then succeeded to all the *personal property*, which was very ample. It was commonly asserted and believed, that she contrived to remit large sums annually, arising from her separate income, to her son, the Electoral Prince. When he afterwards became, by his father's elevation, Prince of Wales, Sophia Dorothea continued to supply him liberally with money from her own purse. She maintained with him a regular intercourse by letters, and expressed towards him the warmest sentiments of affection. It is probable that such proofs of it, however natural, did not tend to heal the breach between her and her husband. She remained till her death at Ahlden; nor did George the First, who survived her, wear mourning for her as his wife, but as his cousin; though he

he permitted his son and the other branches of the Royal Family, to mourn as for their mother and grandmother.

When we consider the principal circumstances of the princess Sophia Dorothea's history, we can form only one opinion respecting her. She was doubtless imprudent, and therefore in some measure culpable; but it is impossible not to acquit her of crime. If all the facts which I have enumerated, do not impress the conviction, there remain others hardly less forcible, drawn either from the internal evidence of the story, or resting on the strongest testimony. She herself, during the long term of her detention at Ahlden, constantly and invariably persisted in asserting her innocence. As often as she received the sacrament, which was frequently, she repeated the protestation; and she confirmed it when near her end. She is said to have admitted that her heart was not indifferent to Konigsmark, but she maintained that her honour was un sullied. The

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lady who was in attendance about her person, on the fatal night when Konigsmark perished, and who let him out of the Princess's apartment, confirmed the same assurance. As an accomplice or participatrix in her mistress's supposed guilt, this lady was imprisoned; but she protested that neither at the last interview of the Count with Sophia Dorothea, nor at any of their preceding ones, had they ever been alone for an instant together.

It is very commonly asserted here at Hanover, that Madam de Platen was pursued by remorse during her whole life, for having instigated Ernest Augustus to take vengeance on Konigsmark: and they add, that during her last illness she imagined continually that she beheld his spectre near her bedside. But, if George the First had really believed his wife guilty, in the full extent of the term, would he ever have condescended solemnly to propose a reconciliation to her? The very circumstances of Konigsmark's end, rather mark a sudden transport

transport of indignation, or a fally of anger, than the spirit of sober punishment. It has left a stain on the memory of a Prince, otherwise highly amiable in his character; and whatever may be said in its extenuation, the act can no more be justified, than the murder of Monaldefchi by Christina, in the gallery at Fontainbleau.

Before I quit the subject, let me add a few words relative to the death of George the First himself; an event which happened only seven months after that of his wife. It is generally asserted, and all our historians inform us, that he expired at Osnabrugh, on his way to Hanover. I have been more than once in the Episcopal Palace at the former city, where they pretend he breathed his last. But the fact was nevertheless, I apprehend, otherwise. I will relate the particulars of his last illness, as I received them some time since, from an ancient domestic, who attended him on his journey, and which I consider as particularly authentic. His own words will con-

vey the best idea of the fact: "On the
" 20th of June 1727, in the evening,"
said he, "his Majesty arrived at Delden,
" a little town near the frontiers of Ger-
" many, but belonging to Holland. At
" that time he appeared to be in perfect
" health. He was entertained at the seat
" of a Nobleman, about twenty miles from
" thence; and after supper he eat of some
" melons, which doubtless caused the
" indigestion that proved fatal to him.
" He returned to Delden the same night,
" where the Duchess of Kendal expected
" him; for she accompanied, or rather
" followed him, as she travelled with post-
" horses; while the King, by means of
" relays placed on the road, was enabled
" to proceed with more expedition. Hav-
" ing taken some hours repose in the inn,
" he continued his journey for Hanover
" very early on the ensuing morning, the
" Duchess of Kendal remaining behind
" at Delden. Previous to his setting out,
" he drank half a cup of chocolate, and
" soon

“ soon afterwards found himself indisposed.
“ When he arrived at Bentheim, a town
“ about twenty miles from Delden, he
“ was already seriously ill; but his anxiety
“ and impatience to push forward, pre-
“ vented his having recourse to medical
“ assistance. An emetic, had it been ad-
“ ministered at that time, might, it is
“ probable, have saved him.

“ At Rheine, the next stage, which is
“ in the dominions of the Bishop of
“ Munster, his Majesty continuing very
“ unwell, the persons who accompanied
“ him, entreated him to stop, and to call
“ in help; but as he refused, they pro-
“ ceeded. He grew perceptibly worse
“ every minute, and before he got to Ip-
“ penburen, a little town belonging to his
“ Prussian Majesty, the King was become
“ lethargic. One of his arms fell down,
“ and all the endeavours made to revive
“ the limb, by chafing and rubbing it,
“ were ineffectual. The most serious

“ alarms began to be entertained by the
“ persons who attended him ; but he per-
“ sisted in his wish to proceed without
“ delay. At Ippenburen, they held a sort
“ of consultation on the measures proper
“ to be adopted ; and a messenger was
“ dispatched to acquaint the Duchess of
“ Kendal with his Majesty’s illness. He
“ met her about two miles beyond Rheine,
“ and on receiving this information, she
“ made all haste to come up with the
“ King.

“ No remonstrances or expostulations
“ could prevail on him to stop at Ippen-
“ buren. He had only eighteen miles
“ from thence to his brother’s Palace at
“ Osnabrugh, where he knew that every
“ accommodation and aid could be pro-
“ cured. His tongue began to swell,
“ his senses to fail, and his articulation
“ to become indistinct. But, as long
“ as he could make himself understood,
“ he continued to repeat, ‘ Osnabrugh !
“ Osnabrugh !’

“ Osnabrugh !’ They therefore hurried
“ on, in hopes of reaching that city
“ while he was still alive, though the King
“ was fallen totally senseless into the arms
“ of one of his attendants, a gentleman
“ named Fabrice. The place where he
“ expired, is difficult to ascertain ; but it is
“ believed that he breathed his last, as the
“ carriage mounted the high hill out of
“ Ippenburen. The body was, indeed,
“ still warm when they arrived at Osnabrugh, where his veins were cut, and
“ every method was vainly used to recover
“ him, as he never gave any sign of life
“ or perception, after leaving Ippenburen.
“ About half-way between that place and
“ Rheine, a second courier, dispatched from
“ Osnabrugh, announced to the Duchess
“ of Kendal, that George the First was no
“ more. She received the intelligence with
“ demonstrations of violent grief, tearing
“ her hair, and exclaiming that she was
“ undone. When her first emotions had
“ subsided, she dismissed the ladies who

“ accompanied her ; and not venturing,
“ or not choosng, to proceed to Hano-
“ ver at such a moment, she took the
“ road to Brunswick, where she remained
“ for three months afterwards.”

My next letter will be from Zell.

LETTER II.

Description of the Castle of Ahlden.—Reflections on the death and history of Sophia Dorothea, Princess of Zell and of Hanover.—Castle of Zell.—Account of the Danish Revolution in 1772.—Particulars of the arrest of Caroline Matilda, Queen of Denmark, of Struensee, and of Brandt.—Removal of the Queen to Zell.—Her last illness and death.—Detail of those events.—Reflections on her character and misfortunes.

ZELL, Sept. 13, 1777.

PROMPTED by curiosity to see the Castle in which Sophia Dorothea, the wife of George the First, resided during so large a portion of her life, I took the road to Ahlden, on leaving Hanover. It lies across an unfrequented part of the Electorate, through a dreary tract of country; and the distance is not less than thirty miles. Ahlden has no title to the appellation of a Castle, except that it is surrounded with a double moat,

moat, across which are thrown draw-bridges. The building itself is composed only of brick and wood, resembling rather a large farm-house than a Ducal seat, and describing three sides of a square in figure. I observed on one part, the date 1579; and over the principal entrance are the arms of the House of Brunswick, with the year 1613 inscribed beneath. The whole mansion has an air of antiquity spread over it, mixed with melancholy sequestration; and the rooms are neither numerous nor elegant, though superior to what the external appearance seems to announce. In a large square apartment, which was the eating-room, are preserved two portraits; one of George the First at full length in his robes of state; the other of Sophia Dorothea herself. This last picture is very ill executed; but it resembles all the other portraits of her which I have seen. She is represented in a sort of fancy dress embroidered, and her hair ornamented with flowers. The face is charming, and there
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is in its expression a wildness or playfulness, which adds to its effect.

Adjoining to the above-mentioned apartment, on the same floor are three rooms, one within the other. They command a tolerable prospect to the North, over the meadows in front of the house, through which runs the river Aller, at the distance of three hundred paces. In the innermost chamber, the unfortunate Princess of Hanover expired on the 13th of November 1726, at eleven o'clock at night. She was then sixty years and nine months old, of which she had passed near forty at Ahlden. From the Gazette of that year, we are only informed that her preceding indisposition was short. Many of the villagers remember her; and they confirm the fact of George the Electoral Prince her son, (afterwards King George the Second,) having attempted in vain to obtain access to her. Anxious to see his mother, he swam his horse across the river Aller, and unaccompanied by any one, reached the Castle.

He even passed the outward moat, but was stopped at the drawbridge of the inward moat, by the Baron de Bulau, under whose care Sophia was placed. He drew his sword, informed the Prince that he had orders to refuse all admittance to the Princess, and compelled him to retire without accomplishing his purpose. Her death, which as I have already said, preceded the decease of George the First about seven months, unquestionably prevented her son from restoring her to the honors of which she had been so long deprived.

Very late the same day on which I visited Ahlden, I arrived at this city, where every object recalls the image of another Princess, scarcely less unfortunate than Sophia. I mean, as you will easily imagine, her descendant, the late Queen of Denmark, Caroline Matilda. It is curious and affecting to contemplate the similarity of their history. Both were precipitated in the prime of youth from their elevation, and their pretended lovers equally fell by
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the hand of the assassin, or of the executioner. The two Princesses alike expiated their errors, in imprisonment or in exile ; and they now repose together in the same vault, where their remains are deposited side by side. History, from Julia, the daughter of Augustus, down to the present hour, is little more than a repetition of the same supposed crimes, accusations, and punishments. It is only changing the name of Pandataria, to that of Ahlden or of Zell. Sempronius Gracchus, the lover of Julia, perished by a violent death, like Konigsmark and Struensee. The Semiramis of one age, is the Catharine of another.

This place is no longer to be recognized for the same city as it was three years ago, when it exhibited the aspect of gaiety, amusement, and pleasure. Now all is silent and desert. Not a carriage is to be seen or heard in the streets ; grass already grows in the area of the Castle, and hardly a human creature is to be found within
its

its walls. I wandered yesterday for a considerable time through the galleries and apartments, without being able to meet any person; till entering one of the rooms, I discovered at the farthest extremity a man, whom I soon recognized to be Mantel, the late Queen's faithful valet-de-chambre. He conducted me over the Castle. In the range of rooms which was occupied by the Queen Matilda, every thing remains exactly as it was left in May 1775, the period of her death. The Castle of Zell is still a noble edifice, fit for the residence of a Sovereign Prince. It is a Gothic fortress, of a square figure, surrounded by a deep moat, having ramparts and bastions for its defence. In the center is a quadrangle, and the whole structure forcibly reminds the beholder of those antique deserted castles, so frequently described in romances. Though part of it is near four hundred years old, and tending to decay, yet the far greater part, which was rebuilt, or at least modernized by George William, Duke

Duke of Zell in the last century, continues in perfect preservation. The apartments, inhabited by the late Queen of Denmark, may almost be termed magnificent; but in a few years they will probably sink into a state of neglect and dilapidation.

You request me to relate the history of that Princess. You desire to know the principal circumstances of the Danish revolution; the manner of the Queen's subsequent life at Zell; finally, the particulars of her last illness, death, and character. Many reasons make me unwilling to gratify your curiosity. The revolution of Denmark in 1772, as it is commonly termed, was not, like that of Sweden in the same year, a political or constitutional revolution, which altered the form of the government: it was only a convulsion of the Court, produced by the indiscretion of a young and unexperienced Queen, facilitated by the imbecility of a weak and credulous King, who permitted his mother-in-law and brother to seize on the administration,

nistrations, which he was himself incapable of exercising in person. When Gustavus the Third effected the revolution at Stockholm, every circumstance was transacted in open day, and became matter of notoriety. But, the arrest and imprisonment of the Queen Matilda, of Struensee, and of Brandt, were performed in the night, and the scene was the Royal Palace at Copenhagen. The facts attending that extraordinary transaction, are besides too recent, to justify their entire disclosure. In compliance nevertheless with your desire, I shall state to you the leading events, which preceded and followed the Danish revolution. If I do not relate every thing that has come to my knowledge, you may on the other hand be assured, that the facts which I record, are authentic.

The marriage of Christian the Seventh, King of Denmark, with the Princess Caroline Matilda of England, was one of those alliances in which neither similarity of disposition, nor any other requisites were found,

found, to ensure felicity. The King soon abandoned himself to irregularities of every kind, too puerile, effeminate, and dissolute for commemoration. Nor was the Court less a scene of universal dissipation, calculated at once to corrupt the heart, and to contaminate the manners. A young and amiable woman, who saw herself neglected by her husband, while she was at the same time an object of respect and homage to every other person that approached her, could scarcely be supposed to escape the contagion of so tainted an atmosphere. Yet, previous to the King's journey in 1768, when he visited England, France, and other countries, the Queen had so conducted herself, as if not wholly to escape detraction, to preserve, however, a great share of general affection and popularity. The birth of the Prince Royal, which preceded the King's departure from Copenhagen, augmented the attachment of the people to her person and dignity.

It was at this time that Struensee, destined afterwards to make too conspicuous a figure in the Danish annals, first became known to Christian the Seventh. The father of Struensee was only a deacon of Rensbourg, a little town in the Duchy of Sleswick, where he still continues to reside. He never loved his son, and frequently, during the short term of Struensee's elevation, foretold or apprehended his approaching fate. When the King of Denmark determined on visiting some of the Courts Europe, Struensee was appointed to attend his Majesty, in quality of physician; he having previously practised medicine with some reputation and success, at Altona. Brandt, who suffered at the same time with Struensee on the scaffold, and whose two names are now become inseparably blended in history, was of a more elevated extraction. His family, though not noble, was very respectable, originally from Holstein, in the vicinity of Hamburgh, where his
ancestors

ancestors were established. He possessed many qualities calculated to advance their possessor in a court. His manners were polished, his address easy, and his conversation lively, as well as amusing. Throughout his life, no less than at his death, he manifested personal courage; but in principle and virtue he was totally deficient.

Among the favourites of Christian the Seventh, who were the companions of his pleasures, Brandt occupied a distinguished place; and he was commonly selected from among the crowd of courtiers, to make one of the party at the King's private suppers. Having been appointed a Gentleman of the Bed-chamber, he flattered himself that he should be placed on the list of those, whom his Danish Majesty named to accompany him on his intended travels. It was not therefore, without equal surprise and mortification, that Brandt found his name excluded. He attributed his rejection to the enmity and rivalry of the young Count Holcke, who had supplanted him, as he

conceived, in his Sovereign's favour. Stung with a preference so injurious to his views, Brandt endeavoured to procure the disgrace of Holcke, by means of an anonymous letter addressed to the King, accusing that favourite of disaffection. But, the attempt proved ruinous to himself: the letter having been soon traced to its real author, Brandt received an order to quit Copenhagen in twenty-four hours. He obeyed, and retired to Paris, where he remained in obscurity, as well as indigence. When the King of Denmark arrived at that city, Brandt found means to represent his poverty, and obtained from his master a present of a hundred Louis-d'ors.

Struenfee meanwhile had accompanied Christian the Seventh on his travels. He and Brandt meeting at Paris, they formed a sort of connection or compact, by which it was agreed that if Struenfee, on his return to Denmark, should attain sufficient credit at Court, he would use it to obtain the recall of the other. During the King's stay

stay in France, Struensee had risen to a considerable degree of favour; and his Majesty soon after his arrival at Copenhagen, presented him to the Queen with his own hand; recommending him at the same time to her as a man of talents, and as peculiarly skilled in the profession of physic. He was promoted immediately to the place of a Privy Counsellor, and soon became as acceptable to the Queen, as he had been to her husband.

Reasons of a very delicate and peculiar nature, facilitated his progress in that princess's good opinion. The King and she having been alienated from each other, in consequence of his excesses, and having ceased to cohabit together, Struensee undertook to reconcile them, and succeeded in the attempt. He received every day from both, new marks of consideration and esteem. Brandt, by his endeavours, was recalled to Court, reinstated in office, and they were shortly afterwards raised at the same time, to the rank of Counts. Struensee

in particular became not only the declared favourite, but was constituted first minister, with almost unlimited political power. So rapid and extraordinary an elevation, necessarily excited many comments; and envy or malignity added a thousand reports, injurious to the honour of the Queen.

It must be admitted even by those to whom her memory is most dear, that her imprudence was great and inexcusable. Not only in private, but at the theatre, in the streets of Copenhagen, and before multitudes of spectators, she manifested a very injudicious preference for Struensee. He was himself sensible of her Majesty's indiscretion, and endeavoured, but without effect, to induce her from prudential motives, to moderate the testimonies of her partiality towards him in public. The levity of her conduct was augmented by the impropriety of her dress on many occasions. She was accustomed to ride out with Struensee, habited completely in men's cloaths, without any mixture of female attire;

attire ; and though this mode is neither uncommon among ladies in the north of Europe, nor implies any immodesty of deportment, yet it tended to increase the popular clamour and misrepresentation.

The King was a passive and quiet spectator of Struensee's favour, as well as of the Queen's attachment to him. Though indifferent towards his wife, he nevertheless esteemed her ; nor did he feel or express the slightest resentment at her behaviour. His mind and body, equally debilitated by excesses of every kind, left him without activity, and almost without perception or sentiment. He sunk into a state of imbecility, which while it rendered him capable of receiving the worst impressions, disqualified him from appreciating their truth, or taking any part in the management of public affairs. The administration devolved therefore on the Queen, Struensee, and their adherents : but the Court was plunged in diversions, and immersed in pleasures, which were soon to

be succeeded by scenes of a very different nature.

Struensee was unquestionably a man of abilities, capable of great application to business, rapid and decisive in his resolutions, as well as enlarged and patriotic in his views. Many of his measures tended to the amelioration, improvement, and aggrandizement of Denmark. But he neither possessed the profound policy, the severe vigilance, nor the superior judgment, requisite for maintaining him in his sudden elevation. Towards the close of his ministry, he acted without foresight or address; as if, with the difficulties which augmented round him, he lost the strength and presence of his understanding. At the head of his enemies, who were numerous, powerful, and implacable, appeared the Queen Dowager, and her son Prince Frederic. The former, Juliana Maria of Brunswick Wolfenbittel, widow of Frederic the Fifth, the late King, had assuredly not received from nature any pre-eminent qualities for government.

ment. Her son, who seemed still less formed to occupy a distinguished place in the history of his country, inspired little apprehension. But the indiscretion of the young Queen, and the fatal security of Struensee, supplied every defect. Patience and perseverance were alone necessary, in order to ripen the machinations prepared for their destruction.

Several persons of the first quality and consideration, impelled by ambition, indignant at the preference shewn to an obscure stranger, or irritated by their exclusion from office, joined the Queen Dowager's party. Among the chief, were Counts Rantzau and Osten, General Eichstedt, and Colonel Koller Banner. Various consultations were held by them, relative to the measures proper to be pursued; and towards the close of the year 1771, they finally determined to proceed to action without further delay. On the first day of January every year, it was customary at Copenhagen for the populace to

to assemble near the Royal Palace, where an ox, roasted whole, was distributed among them. As the Court and Royal Family usually assisted at this festivity; the Queen Matilda had signified her intention of being present, accompanied by the King, and their ordinary attendants. Such an occasion appeared too favourable to be neglected. The partizans of Juliana Maria and Prince Frederic, having gained over a sufficient number of the soldiery, came to a resolution of breaking in among the crowd, arresting their opponents, and even of putting them to death upon the spot, if any resistance were attempted. Nothing could have prevented the success of the plan, which would have been greatly facilitated by the confusion arising from the assemblage of people; but it was disconcerted when near its execution, by an anonymous warning sent to a nobleman in the Queen Matilda's household, enjoining him to be absent, if he regarded his safety. He immediately communicated to her

7 Majesty

Majesty this alarming intimation, which she by no means despised ; and on pretence of indisposition, she announced her resolution not to be present at the ceremony. So unexpected a failure on her part, frustrated the project, without inspiring her or her adherents with sufficient caution against future attempts of a similar nature ; while their enemies, disconcerted but not disheartened, prepared to renew their attack under more favourable circumstances.

They at length resolved to seize on the Queen Matilda, and the principal persons attached to her, at the close of a masked ball, which was to be given in the Royal Palace, upon the 15th of January 1772. Count Rantzau undertook the delicate commission of persuading the King to sign the order for the purpose, and of putting it afterwards into execution. To Koller Banner was assigned the important task of arresting Struensee ; and all the inferior arrangements for ensuring success, were settled with great dexterity. They were
never-

nevertheless on the point of being overturned, at the very moment when all was ripe for action. Rantzau, upon whose courage, fidelity, and secrecy, no reliance could be placed, determined not only to withdraw his assistance from the party in which he had enlisted, but to reveal the whole conspiracy to Struensee. On the afternoon of the 15th of January, only a few hours before the ball was to begin, he wrote to the minister, desiring to see him at his own apartments, upon business of the utmost importance. Struensee intended to have gone thither; but, being detained by a variety of affairs till it grew late, he went straight to the ball, and thereby lost the fairest occasion of extricating himself from destruction.

Rantzau, thus disappointed in his design of betraying his associates, was not the less resolved to renounce all further participation in their schemes. He sent a message therefore to the Queen Dowager, acquainting her that he should be unable to come

to

to the Palace, or to execute the part assigned him in the projected revolution, on account of a violent attack of the gout, to which disease he was constitutionally subject. In order to support the deception, he caused his legs to be wrapped in flannels. This message, at once embarrassing and unexpected, threw the persons to whom it was addressed, into the utmost consternation. But, the spirit and decision of Koller Banner soon surmounted Rantzau's pretended indisposition. Having entreated the Queen Juliana Maria not to be alarmed, and conscious of the motives from which Rantzau acted, Koller Banner sent his own sedan chair to the Count's house. It was accompanied by two grenadiers with their bayonets fixed, who had positive orders to put him into the chair at all events, and to conduct him to the Palace without an instant's delay. They were authorized to use force, if necessary; but Rantzau, aware that resistance was vain, submitted, was carried to Court, and

and performed the service expected from him. Koller Banner was the animating soul of the enterprize, to whose coolness, presence of mind, and intrepidity, its success must be principally attributed. During the whole night, while at the ball, he maintained the utmost serenity of deportment, and played at the same game of cards with Monsieur Berger, whom he immediately afterwards arrested.

Two circumstances which took place in the course of the evening, excited remark, and ought to have awakened suspicion. The King, Queen, and their attendants, entered the ball room before ten o'clock; but Prince Frederic, contrary to his usual custom, and in some measure contrary to the respect due from him towards their Majesties, did not arrive till more than an hour later. His countenance was flushed, and his disordered looks betrayed the agitation of his mind. As soon as he came, the Queen advancing towards him said, "Vous venez
" d'arriver bien tard, mon frere: Qu'avez
" vous?"

“vous ?”—“C’est que j’ai eu des affaires,”
“Madame,” replied he. “Il me semble,”
answered she gaily, “que vous auriez
“mieux fait de penser à vos plaisirs qu’à
“vos affaires, pendant une soirée de bal.”

The Prince made little or no reply, and the conversation ended. The other incident was still more calculated to have alarmed Struensee, if he had not overlooked it, or had not omitted the necessary precautions for his safety. As he was conscious of his own unpopularity, and dreaded some commotion among the people, he had surrounded the ball-room with guards, on whose fidelity he knew or believed he could rely. But, the officer who commanded them, having been gained by the opposite party, changed the soldiers. The alteration was even noticed by some of Struensee’s friends, though it did not impress them with sufficient apprehension, to produce any inquiry in consequence.

Between twelve and one o’clock the King quitted the room, and retired. The
Queen,

Queen, who continued there to a later hour, supped with a large party in her own box, to which Prince Frederic was not admitted nor invited. After dancing the greater part of the night with Struensee, her Majesty and he both withdrew nearly at the same time, about three o'clock. The company soon followed, and the two last persons who remained in the ball-room, were Brandt and the Countess d'Ostlein, between whom there subsisted an attachment. They were engaged in conversation, when the master of the revels went up to Brandt, and said, "Every one is gone; I must order the lights to be extinguished."—"I will give directions for that purpose," replied he; "leave it to me." A singular fatality seems to have attended the Queen and her friends. In order to seize upon so numerous a body of men, many of whom, it was unquestionable, would resist, if they were not taken by surprize, and separately, it was requisite to attack them when unprepared and alone.

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The Countess d'Ostern had invited a select company of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were Struensee and Brandt, to drink tea in her apartments, after the conclusion of the ball. If this party had taken place, it would have frustrated the plans of the Queen Dowager and her son. They would probably have esteemed it too dangerous, to attack several of the first men in Denmark, collected together in one room, who were capable of resistance, and might have either escaped, or have defended themselves successfully. In such an attempt the Royal Palace, where the principal among them were lodged, must have been rendered a scene of blood and horror. But, one of the ladies who was invited, Madame de Schimmelman, having a violent head-ach, excused herself: Madame de Bulow, unwilling to go without her friend, made her excuses likewise; and the Countess d'Ostern being then the only remaining female of the party, it was abandoned. Every one retired to their re-

spective apartments, and left the chiefs of the enterprize free to commence their operations.

The moment for action was now arrived. Rantzau, without loss of time, entering the bedchamber of the King, awoke him, and acquainted him that there existed a conspiracy against his person and dignity, at the head of which were his wife, Struensee, and various of their associates. He then besought his Majesty to consult his own security, by instantly signing an order for their arrest, which Rantzau tendered him; using every argument to enforce his solicitations. But, Christian, though feeble in mind, and taken by surprize, not only hesitated, but refused to affix his name to the paper. The Queen Dowager and Prince Frederic were therefore called in to his bedside; and by means of expostulations, supported by exaggerated or false representations of the danger which he incurred from delay, they at length procured his reluctant consent. He signed the order,

der,

der, which was immediately carried into execution.

Koller Banner repairing to Struenfee's chamber, forced open the door, and seized him in his bed. He was asleep when this event took place, for which he was so totally unprepared, that having no cloaths near the bedside, except his masquerade drefs, he was necessitated to put on the Domino breeches which he had worn at the ball, for want of any others. The weather being extremely cold, he was permitted to wrap himself in his fur cloak, and they then conveyed him in a coach to the citadel. While Koller Banner arrested Struenfee, Beringshold, a man of a desperate but intrepid character, accompanied by some soldiers, entered the room in which Brandt was lodged. Unlike Struenfee, he started up, seized his sword, and prepared for resistance ; but on the soldiers, by Beringshold's orders, levelling their pieces, and threatening to fire on him, he gave up his sword, and surrendered him-

self prisoner. In the same manner as his companion in misfortune, he was instantly conducted under a guard, in a coach, to the citadel. Various other noblemen and gentlemen, their adherents, were at the same time put into a state of arrest, or had centinels placed at the door of their apartments.

But the most dangerous and important act of the enterprise still remained to perform; that of arresting the Queen Matilda. After retiring from the ball, she continued some time in her own room, before she went to bed, occupied in suckling her little daughter, who was still at the breast. Struensee's chamber being situated directly under the Queen's, the noise made by Koller Banner in seizing his person, was indistinctly heard by her Majesty. She by no means however attributed it to the real cause. On the contrary, imagining that the disturbance was occasioned by the company, which, as she knew, was to meet in the apartment of Madame d'Ostein, and

and which party, she concluded, had been transferred to Struensee's; she ordered one of her women to go down, and to request them to be less intemperate in their mirth, as they would otherwise prevent her from taking any repose. The woman did not return: the noise ceased; and the Queen having soon retired to rest, fell into a profound sleep.

It was about five o'clock in the morning, when she was awakened by a Danish female attendant, who always lay in the adjoining room. Holding a candle in one hand, she held out a paper to the Queen in the other, which, with marks of agitation, she requested of her Majesty to peruse. It contained a request, rather than an order, couched in very concise, but very respectful terms, stating that "the King of Denmark, for reasons of a private nature, wished her to remove to one of the Royal Palaces in the country, for a few days." The Queen, in her first surprize, had imagined that the note which she saw in her wo-

man's hand, came from the Baron de Bulow, her master of the horse; and that its purport was to enquire, whether it was her pleasure to hunt on that day. But, no sooner had she cast her eye over the paper, and read its contents, with the Royal signature annexed, than she instantly comprehended the nature and extent of her misfortune. Conscious that if she could only gain access to the King, she could in a moment overturn the plans of her enemies, she sprung out of bed; and without waiting to put on any thing except a petticoat and shoes, she rushed into the antichamber. There, the first object which she met was Count Rantzau, seated quietly in a chair. Recollecting then her dishevelled state, she cried out, "Eloignez vous, Monsieur le Comte, pour l'amour de Dieu, car je ne suis pas presentable." She immediately ran back into her chamber, and hastily threw on some cloaths, assisted by her women.

On

On attempting a second time to leave her room, she found that Rantzau had withdrawn himself, but had stationed an officer in the door-way, who opposed her further passage. Rendered almost frantic by this insult, added to her distress, she seized him by the hair, demanding to see Count Struensee, or the King. "Madam," said he, "I only do my duty, and obey my orders. There is no Count Struensee now, nor can your Majesty see the King." Having pushed him aside, she advanced to the door of the anti-chamber, where two soldiers had crossed their firelocks, in order to stop her progress. The Queen commanded them to let her pass, and added promises of reward if they obeyed. Both the soldiers fell on their knees, and one of them said in Danish, "It is a sad duty, but we must perform it. Our heads are answerable, if we allow your Majesty to pass." As no one, however, dared to lay hands upon

the Queen, she stepped over the muskets which were crossed, and ran half wild, along the Corridore, to the King's apartment. She even forced her way into it by violence; but her enemies, aware that she might try to gain admittance, and justly apprehensive of her influence over him, had taken the precaution of removing him betimes, to another part of the Palace.

Exhausted by the agitation of her mind, and by such exertions of body, the Queen attempted no further resistance. She returned to her own chamber, where she was aided to dress herself, and informed that she must instantly quit Copenhagen. Rantzau had the insolence to say to her, alluding to his gouty feet, "*Vous voyez, Madame, que mes piéds me manquent; mais, mes bras sont libres, et j'en offrirai un à votre Majesté, pour l'aider à monter en voiture.*" She was then put into a coach, which waited for her at the door near the chapel of the Palace. Two ladies, a maid servant, the little Princess her daughter, whom

whom she suckled, and a Major in the Danish service, got into the carriage with her. They took the road to Cronsbourg, a distance of about twenty-four miles, which, as they drove at a great rate, they soon reached, and in which fortress the Queen was confined.

Having thus minutely related the particulars of that extraordinary night, it is not my intention to enter on any of the events which followed. They were in general matters of notoriety. All Europe knows the tragical catastrophe of Brandt and Struensee; the former of whom suffered for his political and private connection with the Minister and favourite of the Queen Matilda. It was not the blow given by him to Christian the seventh, that brought him to the block. That imprudent act served, indeed, for a pretext on which to found the accusation; but was not his real crime. While in prison he was always gay, and never appeared to apprehend that he should be put to death. His flute constituted his principal resource, and he was accustomed

accustomed frequently to play the air in the "Deserteur," beginning, "Mourir, c'est notre dernier ressort."

Struensee was as much his superior in talents, as he fell beneath Brandt in personal courage. While confined in the citadel, Struensee drew up his famous confession: a composition which did more honour to his ability as a writer, than to his constancy or fortitude as a man. In it he avowed, or divulged, more than his enemies probably expected; perhaps, more than was even true. At the scaffold he manifested contrition, as well as pusillanimity, while Brandt met his punishment with a sort of careless and unprincipled intrepidity. The fate of the imprisoned Queen was long doubtful, and she probably owed to her near alliance with the King of Great Britain, that measures of extreme severity were not adopted against her, by the new ministry of Denmark. It was proposed to immure her for life, in some of the prisons of state; and the Castle of Aabourg in the peninsula of Jutland, a solitary and sequestered

tered province of the Danish dominions, was once destined for the purpose. But, the powerful and spirited interposition of the British Crown procured her release, after passing more than four months in the fortress of Cronsbourg. She embarked from Elsfineur, in the end of May 1772, and landed at Stade in the Hanoverian dominions, where she was received with distinguished honours.

It was nevertheless matter of embarrassment and difficulty, to fix the precise place for her future residence; as neither the state of her finances, nor the peculiar circumstances attending her situation, seemed to dictate Hanover. The Castle of Zell, more retired from public notice, seemed better adapted in many respects. But, it had not been inhabited, except at short intervals, for near seventy years, and required considerable repairs in order to render it commodious. The Queen therefore was carried during the summer, to a little hunting seat, in a remote part of the Electorate, not far from the banks of the Elbe,

Elbe, named Gœurde, belonging to her brother, His Britannic Majesty. She remained there in profound retirement, with only a few attendants, till the autumn, when she repaired to the Castle of Zell, which had been intermediately rendered fit for her reception. The liberality of the King of Great Britain provided her a becoming household, composed principally of Hanoverian nobility of both sexes. The Queen, who was under no sort of restraint or confinement, except that which her rank and dignity necessarily imposed, had frequent drawing-rooms, at which persons of condition were presented; and a theatre was fitted up for her amusement in the Castle, where dramatic pieces were frequently performed.

Her table, if not splendid, was elegant; and the Queen's affability, added to her natural cheerfulness of temper, rendered her little Court more than commonly agreeable. Her pleasures, indeed, were extremely limited, from the nature of her pecuniary resources: for such

was

was the generosity of her disposition, that it exhausted her means, and frequently left her almost destitute of money. But she was well repaid by the general attachment which she inspired. Never was any Princess more universally beloved ; and never were the advantages of adversity, on a mind naturally strong, well disposed, and good, more strikingly exemplified than in her. She possessed excellent talents, numerous resources, and great accomplishments. Had her life been prolonged, she would no doubt have made ample atonement for the errors, into which youth, inexperience, and flattery, had precipitated her while on the throne of Denmark. She was unfortunately snatched away in the prime of life, at twenty-four years of age, and after a residence of scarcely more than two years and a half at Zell. I drew from Mantel, her valet-de-chambre, whom I have already mentioned, and who attended her to the last moment, the minute detail of all the circumstances attending her illness and

and death. They are too interesting, as well as authentic, not to preserve them, as nearly as possible, in Mantel's exact words. The simplicity of the narration is more affecting, than any studied recital.

“ The Queen,” said he, “ who was of
“ a plethoric habit of body, had been
“ always constitutionally subject to inflam-
“ mations in her throat; and the weather at
“ the time when she died, was uncommonly
“ warm. On Thursday the 4th of May
“ 1775, she rose, as was her custom, rather
“ early, and walked out. The ladies who
“ accompanied her Majesty, though they
“ used many entreaties, could not prevail
“ on her to wear a capuchin, and she re-
“ turned after a long walk of about two
“ hours. When she entered the Castle, I
“ met her. Letting her arms fall, as if
“ fatigued, she said, “ Mantel, I am not
“ well ; I am exceedingly tired, and have
“ passed a restless night.” I brought in
“ breakfast, and she continued very lan-
“ guid ;

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“ guid ; but nevertheless, made her ap-
“ pearance at dinner, though she eat little
“ or nothing. In the afternoon, she com-
“ plained for the first time, that her throat
“ gave her pain, and felt inflamed. When
“ the card tables were placed in the even-
“ ing as usual, she was too much indis-
“ posed, to be able to take any part in the
“ diversion. The ladies about her, pro-
“ posed therefore, to have a sofa brought,
“ in order that she might lie down, and
“ look on while they played. Perceiving
“ that the Queen was very ill, I presumed
“ to offer my advice, that she should
“ go immediately to bed, to which she
“ consented, and ordered her women to
“ undress her. I then implored her to
“ send for Leyser her physician, which she
“ at first refused ; but on my repeated im-
“ portunity, permitted me to call him in to
“ her assistance. As soon as he had felt her
“ pulse, he was greatly alarmed. “ Mantel,”
“ said the Queen to me, when he was
“ gone, “ I am very ill, and I fully be-
“ lieve

“ lieve I shall die.” Though I affected to
“ treat her opinion as unfounded, I was
“ not the less deeply impressed with a
“ conviction, that she was in imminent
“ danger.

“ On the ensuing day the symptoms
“ became worse, and upon Saturday, erup-
“ tions appeared all over her body. Zim-
“ merman, the celebrated physician, being
“ sent for from Hanover, arrived on the
“ Sunday; but, her disorder, which was a
“ putrid fever of a very malignant nature,
“ already assumed the most alarming aspect,
“ and left scarcely any hopes of her re-
“ covery. On Monday, the Queen’s voice
“ began to grow inarticulate, but she pre-
“ served her senses perfectly. I sat by her
“ Majesty continually, night and day,
“ though she many times commanded me
“ to leave her, and go to rest, as I must
“ have need of sleep. I was however ab-
“ sent only a few minutes at intervals,
“ in order to take some refreshment. At
“ length, on the Tuesday, which was the
“ day

“ day preceding her death, as all her
“ female attendants were exhausted with
“ watching, and I was become myself al-
“ most incapable of further exertion or
“ service, a common “ Fille de Garderobe”
“ was permitted to attend her Majesty.
“ This girl was the only person who caught
“ the Queen’s distemper, though it was
“ certainly malignant and infectious in
“ a high degree. She was seized with
“ a violent fever, the symptoms of
“ which exactly resembled those of the
“ Queen’s malady; but, after struggling
“ with it for three weeks, the girl re-
“ covered.

“ During the two last days, the phy-
“ cians pronounced her Majesty’s case
“ desperate and hopeless. Her strength
“ gradually failed, her voice was quite
“ extinct, and her senses alone remained
“ perfect. On Wednesday, the 10th of
“ May, I plainly perceived her dissolution
“ approaching; and that night, about ten
“ minutes after eleven o’clock, she ex-
“ pired.

“ pired. Her women would not, how-
“ ever, be persuaded that she was dead;
“ they laid her head on the pillow, and
“ dressed her, still flattering themselves
“ that she had life remaining. But she
“ was scarcely cold, before the body began
“ to change. At five o’clock on Thursday
“ morning, the alteration was very per-
“ ceptible; and all the spots on her face
“ and neck, which while she was alive,
“ were red or purple, assumed a black
“ colour. So rapid and universal a mortifi-
“ cation succeeded, that it became im-
“ practicable to preserve, or to embalm the
“ body. She was, therefore, put into lead
“ without delay, and her funeral was per-
“ formed on Friday the 12th, at midnight.
“ It was an awful and affecting solemnity,
“ the corpse being followed by an immense
“ multitude of weeping attendants. All
“ Royal honours were paid her, and she
“ was deposited in the vault of the Dukes
“ of Zell, near the coffin of Sophia,
“ Princess of Hanover.”

These

These were the exact particulars of the Queen Matilda's death, as Mantel related them to me. When he had concluded, I asked if there was any foundation for a story, which had been circulated in London, and to which some credit was attached; that she had caught her illness from one of her pages whom she had visited, and who was carried off by a similar malignant distemper? "There certainly was," answered he, "in her household, a page, who died eight days before the Queen's seizure. The disorder which occasioned his death, was a very scorbutic habit of body, attended with ulcers and swelling in the legs. As he expired in the Castle of Zell, the corpse, when about to be interred, was laid out in a coffin not closed down, and placed in a small room of one of the towers, over which was another, where her Majesty frequently remained. The two apartments communicated by a little winding staircase. Before the funeral commenced, the Queen expressed a

“ great desire to look at the body ; but, her
“ ladies opposed it, and represented to her
“ how injudicious, as well as hazardous,
“ such a curiosity might prove. In defiance
“ of their remonstrances, she persisted ne-
“ vertheless in her wish, and went down
“ with that intent, to the chamber in which
“ the body lay ; but, aware of her design,
“ I had locked the door, and removed the
“ key. When she demanded it, I assured her
“ it could not be found ; and after several
“ vain endeavours, she therefore returned
“ to her own room. It happening in the
“ afternoon, I brought tea to her Majesty.
“ We thought that she had given up any
“ further intention of looking at the page ;
“ when, in a few minutes she suddenly
“ started up, and before any of the ladies
“ present could interpose to prevent or
“ stop her, she ran down to the chamber
“ where lay the corpse. Unfortunately,
“ the door was then open : she stepped in,
“ and staid about a minute, not longer, re-
“ garding it attentively ; but, she expressed
“ no

“ no particular horror or emotion at the
“ fight, more than was natural on con-
“ templating such an object. I neither
“ believe that the body could communi-
“ cate any infection, nor is it my opinion
“ that she staid long enough, had there
“ been any, for her to receive it. Whether
“ the incident might have made a deep, or
“ injurious impresson on her imagination,
“ is certainly difficult to say. I cannot
“ however in any degree impute the
“ Queen’s consequent illness and death, to
“ this circumstance.”

I desired him to inform me, if there
was any shadow of reason for suspecting
that poison, or other unnatural means had
been used, to produce her death. “ God
“ only knows,” said he: “ I think, not.
“ The inhabitants of Zell are all as firmly
“ persuaded of her having been poisoned,
“ as if they had seen her swallow it. They
“ accuse an Italian of having administered
“ it to her, though the man had not ap-
“ proached her person, for near or quite a

“ year before her decease. He had been in
“ the service of the Great Duke of Tuf-
“ cany*, and being recommended to her
“ Majesty for a steward, was sent her from
“ Vienna. He proved to be a most profligate,
“ unprincipled man. When he arrived at Zell, he brought with him a
“ very pretty young woman, whom he
“ called his daughter, though she was in
“ reality his mistress. While he stayed
“ here, he contracted a number of debts,
“ and being unable to discharge them, he
“ went off with his mistress, to Brunswic
“ and Berlin. He has not been heard of
“ since. The credulous and prejudiced
“ people accuse him of having been gained
“ by the Danish Court; and believe, that
“ he administered a slow poison to the
“ Queen, before his departure; but, I am
“ not at all inclined to join in such a
“ suspicion.”

* The same who has since been Emperor, by the name of Leopold the Second.

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If Mantel's evidence and opinion were not sufficient to do away so unjust and absurd an imputation, the circumstances of the Queen of Denmark's disorder, as well as a knowledge of the general state of her health and constitution, would suffice, in my judgment, to disprove the idea of poison. I have already remarked, that she was of a very full habit, and at all times inclined to inflammatory complaints. She had been twice attacked with a fever, similar to that which carried her off, in the course of the year preceding her decease. The month of May 1775 began with very warm weather; and the Queen who was accustomed to use violent exercise, had probably over-heated her blood by walking. When these particulars are impartially considered, they sufficiently explain the causes of her death, without having recourse to poison, or to infection.

In her person she was more than agreeable, and might be pronounced handsome, had she not been too large. It is probable,

if she had lived many years, she would have become corpulent, though she endeavoured by temperance and severe exercise, to repress that tendency. Her complexion, like all the Princes of her House, was very fair, her nose well formed, her eyes eloquent and expressive, her under-lip too large; and in speaking, she had a degree of quickness, which nevertheless became her. She had fine teeth, small and regular. Of her manners, as well as of her talents, accomplishments and qualities of mind, I have already made mention. When her history is better known, and more impartially appreciated, posterity will do justice to her memory. They will place her, if not among the number of great, yet certainly in the list of amiable and unfortunate Princesses. They will consider her errors as the result more of situation, example, and court-seduction, than of character or intention. That they were overbalanced and obliterated by her misfortunes, cannot be denied. Her early death

death renders her peculiarly an object, at once of commiseration and of regret. It took place at a very critical moment, and is not the least singular circumstance attending her destiny. I shall probably renew my correspondence from Berlin.

LETTER III.

*Brunswic. — Reigning Duchefs of Brunswic Wolfen-
bottle. — Berlin. — Description of that Capital.*

BERLIN, *October* 19th, 1777.

IN my journey from Zell to this city, I passed three or four days at Brunswic, on all of which I dined or supped at Court. The Hereditary Prince, to my great regret, was absent; his military duty and rank in the Prussian forces obliging him to be at Potsdam, where the reviews and manœuvres are about to commence, which are performed there every autumn. The Hereditary Princess, to whom I had the honour of being known, during the life of the late Queen of Denmark, at Zell, received me very graciously: but I should be ungrateful, if I did not mention in a distinguished manner, the marks of attention which I received during my stay, from the reigning Duchefs of Brunswic. She
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is a sister of the present King of Prussia, and possesses no inconsiderable portion of the genius, as well as superiority of mind, which in this age peculiarly characterize the Family of Brandenburg, as they did in the last, the House of Orange.

Time has by no means enfeebled her mental powers, or diminished the animation which pervades her discourse, though she has already passed her sixtieth year. She did me the honour to converse with me repeatedly and unreservedly, upon many topics. History, polite letters, poetry, philosophy, travels, were all familiar to her. I have scarcely ever met with a woman in any walk of life, who possessed an understanding more enlarged and cultivated. She remembers George the First, whom she had seen in her early youth at Berlin; and she recounted to me some interesting anecdotes relative to him, as well as to the old Electress Sophia, her great grand-mother. More than once, in the course of our conversation, she lamented

the fetters that her rank imposed on her, and the inability which it inflicted of visiting the various countries of Europe. “How much,” said she to me, “do I envy you that gratification, the renunciation of which is dearly purchased by all that birth, or fortune, or elevation can bestow!” I was as much penetrated with her condescension and unreserve, as I was charmed by her capacity and love of knowledge. If she had been placed on a more conspicuous theatre, she would, I am persuaded, have acquired great celebrity: but she is lost in a German Court of the second order, such as Brunswic. Who would ever have heard of Catherine the Second, had she remained at Stettin, or at Zerbst, in her original obscurity? It is fortune alone which can call out extraordinary abilities, and place them in their proper sphere. Neither Richlieu, nor Colbert, nor Alberoni, however eminent their talents, would have denied their obligations to her.

I have

I have said nothing to you of the Reigning Duke of Brunswic, who is now about sixty-four, and little more than a ruin. I was presented to him; but he no longer eats in public, since he has been visited by a paralytic stroke, fifteen months ago. It is nevertheless easy to perceive, in spite of his personal infirmities, that he has formerly been handsome and well-made. His articulation is become very indistinct, and his constitution totally enfeebled. I could not look at him, without reflecting on the different destiny of his two brothers. One, the unfortunate Anthony Ulrick, (father of the more wretched Ivan the Third, Emperor of Russia,) still, I believe, exists at Kolmogory, near Archangel, among the perpetual snows, in the vicinity of the Arctic Circle. The other, Prince Ferdinand, commanded, as you will recollect, with distinguished reputation, the allied armies, during the last war in Germany, and is now altogether retired from public life.

On quitting Brunswic, which I could not do without regret, the Hereditary Princess,

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as a proof of her protection, gave me letters of introduction for the Hereditary Prince, her husband; as did the Princess Dorothea, for Prince Frederic of Brunswic, her brother. To the politeness and attention of the latter, I have great obligations, for rendering my stay in Berlin agreeable, as well as useful. He is, like all the Princes of his family, in the service of Prussia; and during the greater part of the year, he resides in this capital. But, he has apartments likewise at the Palace of "Sans Souci," and is one of the few whom the King distinguishes by marks of his peculiar regard and affection. It is from Prince Frederic of Brunswic, that I have received the only minute detail of his uncle's private life, occupations, pleasures, and manner of appropriating his time: particulars, on the accuracy and exactitude of which the most perfect reliance may be placed, and which are objects of the most liberal curiosity!

I must here premise, that I have not been presented to his Prussian Majesty; a misfortune, as well as a distinction, for

for which I am indebted to the "Tour round the Baltic." The freedom with which I ventured to animadvert in that work, on the partition of Poland, and particularly on the treatment of the city of Dantzic by Frederic, have excited his resentment. It was signified, through the medium of his minister, to the British Envoy Mr. Elliot, that my being presented at Court would not be agreeable. I am at a loss to determine, whether I ought to consider such an exclusion as subject of pride, or of mortification; since I certainly cannot either repent, or retract the sentiments which have occasioned it. But, the friendship of Prince Frederic has procured me an occasion of seeing him more agreeably than at his levee, by sending an officer who conducted me, a few mornings ago, to the Princess Amelia's Palace, in the "Rue Guillaume," where his Majesty breakfasted.

I had there the gratification of considering him for a few minutes, divested of the restraint imposed by the forms
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of a Court. The King of Prussia, unlike most of the other Sovereigns of Europe, is neither to be seen, except on very particular occasions, by visiting the capital of his dominions; nor is it at Berlin that his character can be studied, nor his actions investigated. So limited and restrained is the communication between this metropolis and Potzdam, that scarcely any thing transpires here which is transacted there, till several days afterwards. The King may be dangerously indisposed, without its being generally known, or without the nature of his illness being well understood. At Vienna, and at Dresden, they are often better acquainted with the private transactions of Frederic, than in his own capital, only twenty miles from the place of his residence. Such is the policy, and such are the precautions of that able and extraordinary Prince!

Before, however, I enter on the examination of his character, and the leading events of his Reign, I must say a few words
relative

relative to Berlin. They shall be few, in compliance with the principle which I have laid down, of describing men, not cities. Unlike Paris, London, or Madrid, this place recalls to the beholder at every step, the image, the genius, and the actions of the reigning Sovereign. It is a mirror, in which Frederic is perpetually seen, either as the General, the Architect, or the Master. Peter the Great is not more constantly present to the imagination at Peterburgh, than the present King of Prussia at Berlin. He is besides, the Palladio of his own Capital. I have seen him riding slowly through the principal streets, accompanied only by his nephew Prince Frederic of Brunswic, a General Officer, and three or four attendants ; giving exact directions relative to every structure, and examining with his glass at his eye, the progress of the works undertaken for its embellishment.

Like Peterburgh, this city is magnificent, regular, and has sprung up since the
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beginning of the present century. It existed indeed previously; but, only eighty years ago, it contained no more than twenty-five thousand inhabitants. They now estimate the population at above a hundred and twenty thousand. In the centre of Berlin, a stranger finds himself completely surrounded by a groupe of palaces or public buildings, of the most striking kind. Several owe their construction to the present King; and on the front of the Opera House, which he built at the beginning of his reign, we read the short and classic inscription affixed by himself, "Friedericus Rex, Apollini, et Musis." His universal and creative genius has however been constantly intent on maintaining the spirit of military enthusiasm, in the midst of peace, and among all the display of architecture, taste, or magnificence. We never cease to recollect that we are in a country, where from the sovereign to the peasant, every man is born a soldier. But, it is in the Garrison Church, that those feelings are

are peculiarly awakened, animated, and called into action.

I was present at the service performed *there*, some days ago. Nothing in ancient Rome, or Sparta, could have been more ably and artfully calculated to mix the love of glory with the rites of religious worship. Nothing can be more calculated to raise the Prussian soldier in his own estimation, above those of other European States. No relics, saints, or shrines are there to be found: the music, ornaments, and decorations are all military, and all appropriate. Trophies and ensigns, gained in battle, float from the roof in every part of the edifice. They remind the veteran of his past exploits, and carry him, in the midst of devotion, to the scene of his valour at Rosbach, at Lissa, or at Torgau. They soften the anguish of his wounds, awaken the most grateful recollections in his bosom, and render him a participator in the fame of his Sovereign. The four heroes of the Prussian monarchy who fell in battle, Schwerin, Keith,

Winterfeldt, and Kleist, are elevated on four pedestals, surmounted with emblems of war and victory. He who can resist the combined effect of so many objects, acting at once upon the senses, the affections, and the understanding, must be endowed with more than common apathy.

If, however, Berlin strikes by its regularity and the magnificence of its public buildings, it impresses not less forcibly with a sentiment of melancholy. It is neither enriched by commerce, enlivened by the general residence of the Sovereign, nor animated by industry, business, and freedom. An air of silence and dejection reigns in the streets, where at noon-day scarcely any passengers are seen except foldiers. The population, much as it has augmented during the present reign, is still very unequal to the extent and magnitude of the city. Ostentation and vanity, more than utility or necessity, seem to have impelled Frederic to enlarge and embellish his capital. The splendid fronts of
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the finest houses, frequently conceal poverty and wretchedness. A colonnade, hardly inferior to the Louvre, proves when inspected, to be only a casern, or a barrack. We are first disappointed, and in the end disgusted with this deception. Peterburgh, though situate in a much more inclement latitude, has a thousand natural and political advantages, which are sought in vain at Berlin. The Neva itself, at the former city, flowing majestically from the lake Ladoga into the gulf of Finland, is at once a sublime and pleasing object, covered with ships, and exhibiting a scene perpetually varying, as well as gay. Here, the little river Spree creeps along, unnoticed and forgotten. Like London, Berlin is composed entirely of brick; for there are, unfortunately, no quarries of stone in its vicinity. They mask indeed the exterior of the houses with plaster or stucco; but it soon falls off, and betrays the original meanness of the materials. The King too appears to be more fond of constructing than

of repairing, though he compels such of his subjects as build, to conform to the rules of architecture, and to the elevation or plan of the adjoining houses.

Nothing can be more destitute of beauty or fertility, than the environs of Berlin. On every side stretches an expanse of sand, and as soon as a carriage passes the gates, it is buried up to the axle-trees. Scarcely any trees, except firs, are to be seen; and even from hence to Potzdam, the intermediate country is in many parts almost a wilderness. The morass which surrounds Peterburgh, is not so dreary; and the savage rocks, destitute of vegetation, amidst which Stockholm is built, are at least undulated, romantic, and picturesque. Even Hanover, though certainly not placed in a favoured position, or in a fertile soil, yet is preferable in these respects to the Prussian capital. I shall say no more however upon it; nor should I have gone into so large a detail, if I did not consider it as intimately connected with the character and genius of the

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the King. Other cities are constructed or embellished, at least in some degree, by the people, in proportion to the commerce, opulence, or grandeur of the State. But, the most beautiful part of Berlin, the "Fredericstadt," is almost exclusively the work of Frederic. The "Memoires de la Maison de Brandebourg" are scarcely more his own production. Indeed, by no means as much so, if we may believe those who wish to detract from his literary merit. I am however of a different opinion; nor can I see any thing in that performance, to which, without the aid of Voltaire or D'Alembert, the talents of the King are unequal. It is only when he condescends to affect their manner, that we feel inclined to dispute his originality.

LETTER IV.

*Examination of the Character and Actions of
Frederic the Second, King of Prussia.*

BERLIN, October 23, 1777.

IT is difficult to contemplate, and still more difficult to delineate a character so interesting as that of the present King of Prussia, without a degree of enthusiasm allied to partiality. Perhaps, if we except Cæsar in antiquity, no Prince of any age has exhibited such a combination of talents, equally adapted to the field and to the cabinet, to active as well as speculative life. But, like Cæsar, he is not exempt from infirmities, faults, and defects of many kinds; in some of which he bears too close a resemblance to the Roman Dictator. A reign of seven-and-thirty years, passed in perpetual vicissitudes of war and peace, has given him scope for the

the display of all his abilities. His military skill and resources have deservedly placed him among the first Commanders of the present century: while his bold, decisive, and vigorous policy has added extensive provinces to his dominions; and raised *him* from a Sovereign of the second order, almost to an equality with the first crowned heads in Europe. His legislative labors, and his beneficial exertions for enriching, peopling, and fertilizing his country, lay claim to our approbation, and are wise, as well as highly meritorious. Even his leisure has not been without utility to the world, while it has been rendered eminently subservient to his own fame. His compositions, historical, political, and poetic, will be read in future times, if not with admiration, at least with pleasure. When we reflect on these circumstances, can we wonder that he has attracted the universal attention of mankind, and that every other Prince sinks into comparative obscurity near him?

But,

But, while I admit his claim to immortality, I am not disposed to be his panegyrist. Much as we admire, we are little tempted to love him. Ambition, from the hour of his accession to the present moment, has been his only real passion. Neither the faith of treaties, nor the laws of nations, nor the principles of justice and equity, have ever sufficiently restrained him from pursuing the aggrandizement of the Prussian monarchy. The conquest of Silesia, under all the circumstances, can scarcely be justified: the partition of Poland, however its injustice may seem to be diminished by the concurrence of Austria and Russia, was an act that revolted every mind not insensible to the distinctions of right and wrong. His own glory, more than the felicity of his people, has constituted, at every period of his reign, the rule of his political conduct. Though not cruel, he is nevertheless in some respects oppressive: though he rarely permits capital punishments, he exacts pecuniary

cuniary contributions from his subjects, scarcely less subversive of their domestic happiness, than would be the utmost severity of penal laws. His vigilance, it is true, never sleeps; and he is felt on the distant frontier of Courland, or of Cleves, at the extremities of his dominions, almost as much as here at Berlin. But, so was Philip the Second, the most odious tyrant of modern times. It is for the preservation of his own greatness alone, that Frederic wakes. Even his pleasures are gloomy, philosophic, and solitary. Love never invaded the privacy of "Sans Souci," nor softened the austere and cheerless hours of Frederic's private life. He is great, but not amiable; we render homage to his talents, his reputation, and his victories: but we desire to live under a more benign and unambitious Prince. We are pleased to visit Berlin, as an object of liberal curiosity; but we prefer the residence of London, of Vienna, or of Naples.

Frederic

Frederic the Second is the oldest reigning Sovereign in Europe, and has nearly completed his sixty-sixth year. His constitution, naturally sound, if not vigorous, retains its force; and his body is accustomed to, as well as still capable of great fatigue. The gout, and the infirmities almost inseparably attendant on his period of life, have indeed enfeebled his legs; but, once on horseback, and seated in the saddle, he is equal to prodigious efforts, sustained for a very considerable length of time. He is of a middle size, inclined to thin, and he stoops in walking or in riding. His face, though now become wrinkled, more perhaps by fatigues and agitations, than from the progress of age, or the effects of disease, is one of the most animated and interesting ever beheld. There is in it a fire and an intelligence, which widely distinguishes him from common men. Every line and every feature may be studied, and have their meaning. His eye
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is uncommonly clear and brilliant, though he is so short-sighted, as usually to have recourse to a glass, even when on horseback. He has a bold and finely-formed, but not an aquiline nose. Of his hair, time has only spared some few thin and scattered locks, about the crown of his head. In order to supply the want, he wears false curls and a long queue.

Nothing can be so simple as his dress, which never varies. It is indeed scarcely exempt from the imputation of meanness, and by no means always intitled to the praise of cleanliness. His coat is a plain uniform of common blue cloth, without ornament or embroidery of any kind. On his breast appears the star of the Prussian Order of the "Black Eagle;" but he very rarely wears the riband, or other insignia. He is always booted, as becomes a soldier; and those who see him constantly, have scarcely ever beheld his legs. Round his middle is tied his sash. Charles the Twelfth of Sweden might have worn Frederic's sword, without departing from the characteristic

teristic simplicity of his dress. It is a military one, perfectly unornamented, with a plain silver hilt, to which hangs a sword-knot. His hat is of a monstrous size, surmounted with a white Panache or plume. Either economy, or carelessness, or both, induce him to wear his cloaths as long as decency will permit; indeed, sometimes, rather longer. He is accustomed to order his breeches to be mended, and his coat to be pieced under the arms. It was an unusual mark of attention to the Great Duke of Russia, when he was here last year, that the King made up a new uniform suit and hat, in honour of so illustrious a guest. To complete the negligence of his appearance, he takes a great deal of snuff, and lets no small portion of it slip through his thumb and fingers, upon his cloaths. It must be owned that this custom gives him sometimes almost a disgusting air. Yet, across so much neglect and contempt of external forms, I think one may easily, without any aid of imagination, perceive the hero, the philosopher, and the King.

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Through every part of the royal household, there reigns a similar simplicity, which strongly contrasts with the exterior of Royalty in other Courts. Much of it doubtless originates in his dislike of shew, and something must be attributed to pecuniary motives. In divesting himself of the pomp attendant on sovereign power, the King, besides the emancipation, avoids the expence connected with it; and in this part of his character, as in many others, he resembles his father, much more than his grandfather. Frederic the First, the most ostentatious, expensive, and magnificent of Princes, delighted in the pageantry and ceremonial of a Court. Frederic William, the late King, economical almost to parsimony, detested such vain exhibitions; and was supremely happy to smoke and drink among his officers, in an obscure guard-room, or a summer-house. Never was any contrast greater, nor dissimilarity more complete, than between the two last Kings of Prussia.

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When his present Majesty is at "Sans Souci," he is unattended by any regular guard. A corporal and four foldiers are sent there from Potzdam towards evening, and they withdraw at daybreak. Indeed, their presence is not meant for the protection of the King's person; but, merely to secure his peaches and apricots from devastation, to which they might otherwise be liable. He reposes in perfect security, if not on the affections, on the obedience, subjection, and admiration of his subjects. His table, as well as his dress, ^{is} are subjected to certain rules, which mark his character, and which become interesting on that account. No Prince is better served, though without any splendour or magnificence. He is, indeed, by no means insensible to the physical pleasure of eating, considered as distinct from the conviviality of the table; but, as he does not like to eat alone, a small number of persons, usually officers of rank, are every day invited to his dinner. The Emperor Gallienus was not a more

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more accurate proficient in the science of cookery, than is Frederic. He has, it is true, only eight dishes generally served; but each is dressed by a separate cook, and each is excellent in its kind. Four are French, two Italian, and the remaining two are accommodated to his Majesty's particular taste. It must be admitted, that so much attention to the gratification of appetite, favours more of the school of Epicurus, than of Zeno. Philosopher as he is, the Father of the Portico is not his model.

In his dessert the King is expensive and splendid, sparing neither endeavours nor money in order to procure the most delicate fruits in abundance. The productions of the tropical, as well as temperate climates, are heaped before him. He eats plentifully, and drinks gaily as well as freely, of his favourite wines, which are Burgundy and Champagne. I am assured that he commonly swallows near a bottle of the former, and of the latter some glasses

glasses every day. In "liqueurs" he rarely indulges, and he touches no supper. He sleeps without either a night-cap, or any covering about his head. When he rises, his first operation is to pull on his stockings, before he quits the bed, and then his boots over them. His hair and beard are dispatched in a few minutes, by the first valet or footman who presents himself. The Princess Amelia his sister, used formerly to make his shirts; but, as she has of late years become incapable, from disease and infirmity, of continuing the practice, he is obliged to receive them from other hands.

The appropriation of his time, his occupations, and amusements, is regulated with scrupulous accuracy, and never varies except when he is absent from "Sans Souci." "My uncle," said Prince Frederic of Brunswic to me, "rises in summer at four in the morning, and even in winter at five, or soon afterwards. He breakfasts quite alone, on chocolate; and till ten o'clock

“ o’clock he is entirely occupied in trans-
“ acting affairs of state, which he dispatches
“ in person, with rigorous exactitude. From
“ that hour till near noon, he goes first to
“ the parade, then walks, or as is more
“ commonly his custom, rides, if his health
“ permit. He returns to the Palace of
“ Potsdam, or to “ Sans Souci,” before
“ twelve, and sits down to dinner pre-
“ cisely at noon. After the repast, he
“ usually remains some time at table,
“ where he unbends himself in conversation
“ with those about him. His afternoon is
“ divided between books and music, in the
“ latter of which he is a connoisseur and a
“ performer. At six, one of his secretaries
“ enters, and reads to him such letters as
“ are addressed to him upon literary sub-
“ jects, or any intelligence relative to that
“ line of correspondence. He dictates his
“ replies immediately. The King eats no
“ supper, but retires to his chamber at
“ nine, and goes directly to bed. Such is
“ his constant mode of life.”

The empire of the mind over the body was, perhaps, never more forcibly exemplified than in Frederic. Neither fatigue, nor personal infirmity, nor indisposition, unless of the severest kind, seem to have power over him. He can force himself to almost any exertions, and of this faculty he has given a thousand proofs. A singular instance happened only three weeks since. The annual reviews and manœuvres, performed at Potzdam in the autumn, had been postponed more than once, on account of his inability to assist at them in person. His complaints were of a nature which rendered it difficult as well as dangerous for him to appear in public, being troubled with boils, that incapacitated him for sitting his horse. After several delays, the reviews were however at length fixed for a certain day. Contrary to all expectation, the King came on the ground when the troops were drawn up, placed himself at their head, and led them to the charge in person. He supported the first day's fatigue

fatigue tolerably well; but on the second, when he attempted to dismount from his horse, such was his state of weakness, and so exhausted was he, that he immediately fainted. This effect of his exertions did not prevent him from commanding on the third and last day, nor from going through every evolution with his soldiery.

The annual reviews in the vicinity of Berlin, which usually take place in May, are open to the inspection of strangers from every European nation; but in those of Potzdam, the utmost secrecy is preserved. A veil is drawn over them; and neither rank, nor interest, nor favour, can procure admission to be present at their performance. Any person who, incited by curiosity, should venture under a borrowed name, or disguised, to intrude as a spectator, would probably experience a severe and humiliating punishment. Such examples have occurred. The King reserves to himself and to his general officers exclusively, the manœuvres at Potzdam, as a school where

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experiments in the science of tactics may be made, which other Princes and troops are only permitted subsequently to learn by their experience or misfortune in war. Even if the Prussian discipline were not superior to that of Austria, France, or Russia ; yet the mystery, and the precautions that are used to conceal it from public view, cannot fail to produce a great effect. Obscurity is one of the finest sources of the sublime, and always impresses with mingled respect and terror. Frederic has wisely availed himself of every circumstance which may augment the confidence of his own soldiers, and intimidate the enemy.

It is in the vast detail which he embraces, that we find matter of peculiar wonder, as well as admiration. No Sovereign ever knew better the value of time, or apportioned it more systematically. His active and comprehensive genius, inured to the labour of the closet, carries its researches through every department of state. His flexible talents comprehend objects the
most

most dissimilar. He sees, hears, and replies to all dispatches in person, as much as it is possible to be done. The meanest of his subjects can address to the throne their petitions or complaints, without passing through any official medium; and they are secure of receiving an answer, if not of redress. Numberless instances might be cited, to prove the punctuality with which he replies to letters of every kind. Count Dhona, when governor of Konigsberg some years ago, was indebted a small sum to his taylor; but which, though frequently solicited, he always declined to discharge. The taylor, despairing of his own ability to enforce payment, addressed a letter to the King, stating his case, and imploring his Majesty's gracious interference in his behalf. By return of post he received an answer from Frederic, ordering him to wait on Count Dhona immediately, who would have been previously made acquainted with his pleasure, and who would infallibly discharge the debt. The taylor

did as he was commanded, and procured from Dhona his money. That nobleman had met with a severe reprimand, accompanied with a peremptory injunction not to delay the payment of his arrear. I have seen many of Frederic's letters, written with his own hand: they are admirably penned, and frequently contain the most delicately-turned compliments. Mr. Collins, an English merchant, established at Konigsberg, who sends him annually the first sturgeon taken at Pilaw, never fails to receive an answer to his letter that accompanies the present, couched in terms of the highest good breeding. Such attentions from a Sovereign are very flattering. Frederic, who is acquainted with the human heart and its secret springs, knows the value of that coin, and frequently pays in it.

All the scattered rays and functions of royalty are concentrated in his person; and he can scarcely with propriety, be said to have any great officer of state, or even any first minister. Nothing of importance is transacted,

transacted, except by his express orders, of which Finckenstein and Hertzberg, who ostensibly occupy the first employments in the administration, are merely the executors. There is, indeed, a nominal Lord Treasurer: but, a hussar, who can hardly write, or read, fills that office in effect. How the King finds leisure for the various business to which he must necessarily attend, may naturally excite surprize: but the application, order, and method which characterize him, explain the enigma.

The Prussian finances are regulated with the most severe economy; and it is indeed necessary that they should be thus managed, in order to enable the Sovereign to maintain a military force so disproportionate to the pecuniary resources of his country. It is said that Frederic alone is precisely acquainted with the annual amount of his revenues, as well as with the various and intricate nature of the taxes and contributions. So complicated is the system of the finances, that I am assured, it will be

no easy undertaking for his successor to alter any part of it, without danger of destroying and overturning the whole fabric: such is the intimate connection between its various parts. The King himself is arrived at a period of life, which in a great measure precludes the gratification of active or expensive pleasures. He has, in fact, very few; and even those few are indulged within moderate limits. Elizabeth was not more frugal of the public purse. The maintenance of his soldiery, the security of his dominions, the introduction of manufactures, and the fertilization of the barren or depopulated parts of his territories; such are the objects to which the superfluity of his revenues is generally destined.

Frederic may be considered as the only European Prince, who is at this time possessed of a considerable treasure in ready money. Magdeburg is the fortress in which it is deposited. Its amount is uncertain, and variously reported; but that it is large, and annually accumulating, there can

can be no doubt. Certainly, none of the Northern Potentates can contest with him in pecuniary strength. Catherine the Second, who has not yet by any means recovered her immense expenditure in the late war against the Turks, is compelled to apply to Holland, for assistance in raising even a common loan. Sweden as well as Denmark are poor, and both crowns are in debt. Poland, since the partition in 1772, is little more than a nominal sovereignty, inadequate to its own defence. Even Maria Theresa possesses scarcely any treasure, though her resources, dominions, and political power are very extensive. It is difficult to calculate the prodigious superiority, which such a command of money must necessarily confer in the first moments of a rupture, particularly under the direction of a Prince like Frederic. To his father's rigid parsimony, he in fact may be said to owe the acquisition of Silesia, not less than to his own talents and decision. The Emperor Charles the Sixth at his decease, left

left his daughter without a florin in the public treasury. But, the late King of Prussia, more provident, had accumulated the means of facilitating in active hands, the aggrandizement of his family, and the extension of the monarchy.

Music forms the only exception to Frederic's general economy. He indulges himself in the gratification of this elegant and favourite amusement, at a very considerable expence. His opera at Potzdam and at Berlin, costs him annually near four hundred thousand dollars, or about seventy thousand pounds sterling. To the influence of love he has never, at any period of his life, been long, if at all subjected. Various reasons are assigned, and various anecdotes related, in order to explain so singular a defect in his character or constitution. I do not choose to say all that I may have heard upon the subject. There was however a Signora Barberini, an Italian performer in the opera at Berlin, for whom he shewed marks of particular attention and preference.

ence. She was afterwards married to the President Cocceii, and now lives with her husband at Gros-Glogau in Silesia. Voltaire in his "Pucelle," has sketched the King in a situation noway favourable to his reputation as a man of gallantry; but, let it be remembered that Voltaire is a poet, and an incensed one, to whose historical portraits little credit is due. Whether his coldness be the result of moral, or of physical causes, in gallantry of mind he is certainly not at all deficient. On the contrary, it is well known that he is much more easily induced to grant a request made by a woman, than by a man; and he frequently accords to female sollicitation the same boon, which he had positively refused to a general or a courtier. It would be easy to cite instances of the assertion.

His clemency, like that of Cæsar, has been subject of great encomium; and whether we attribute it to a sort of philosophic indifference, to magnanimity of mind, or to refined policy, it still excites our respect.

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Perhaps, it results from a combination of all these sentiments. He is too much elevated above common men by situation and by character, to feel the little emotions of vulgar resentment. The very facility with which he could punish, probably tends to deprive him of the inclination. By a singular paradox, the greatest freedom, or rather licentiousness of complaint and of animadversion, is permitted under the most despotic Prince in Europe, even in his capital, and in his very residence. He reads with perfect good humour, the anonymous Pasquinades which are often fixed up on the garden gates at "Sans Souci;" applauds or criticises the composition, and frequently orders them to remain untouched. Few reigns have been less sanguinary; and public executions are almost unknown throughout the Prussian dominions. His treatment of Trenck was undoubtedly very severe; perhaps, inhuman. But, Trenck was an intractable, desperate, and dangerous madman, whom no common modes of punishment

nishment could terrify or restrain. Injuries, and attempts of the most atrocious nature against his own person, he rarely punishes with the severity practised in other countries. Such lenity may even be justly censurable, since it tends to encourage crimes, by holding out a prospect of impunity. A reprimand, banishment from his presence, or a short confinement in the Castle of Spandau, the Bastile of Prussia; these are the usual marks of his indignation, which seldom proceeds to extremities against the most profligate offenders.

It is nevertheless only justice to make a distinction, due equally to Frederic and to truth. While he overlooks, or suffers to pass unnoticed, the most virulent and indecent attacks on his own conduct or character, he rigorously chastizes crimes against the state. His subjects, though they venture to load him with invectives, dare not transgress the laws. Perhaps, the desire of being handed down to posterity, as not only the greatest, but the most placable of Princes, has conduced more than either
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benignity or policy, to produce the oblivion of injuries which we so much admire in him. It is incontestable that he has allowed men, convicted of intending to poison, or to deliver him up to the enemy, to elude enquiry; or at most to expiate their crime by exile and imprisonment. All Europe has read and heard of these instances, which are too well known to render it necessary for me to commemorate them.

Few Princes ever possessed in a more consummate degree, the art of winning mankind, and of making them subservient to his purposes. His conversation, whenever he wishes to please, is full of softness; and even the tone of his voice inspires with partial sentiments. Versatile, where his interests dictate condescension and affability, he can at pleasure assume the most gracious manners: and he has succeeded in animating all whom he employs, with an enthusiasm to be found nowhere else. His officers, as well as his soldiers, conceive themselves superior to all other troops.

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He is certainly better served, and more implicitly obeyed, than any Sovereign in Europe; though his appointments, particularly in subaltern military employments below the rank of captain, are extremely narrow. Frederic knows how to pay, with equal ease and dignity, the most flattering compliments, where distinguished merit or great actions seem to claim it from him.

When the present Emperor Joseph the Second visited him at Neiss in Silesia, just eight years ago, his Imperial Majesty was accompanied by several Austrian officers of distinction. Among others was General Laudohn, so justly celebrated for the advantages which he gained over the Prussians in the late war, on various occasions. The King affected always to call him *Monsieur le Marechal*, though he well knew that Laudohn had not attained that rank; and omitted no opportunity of expressing the highest admiration for his talents, even at his own expence. When dinner was served, Laudohn, with his usual modesty, would have placed himself on the other side of the

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table, at a respectful distance: but, Frederic ordered him to take a place near himself. “Placez vous *à cotè* de moi, Monsieur le Marechal,” said he; “je n’aime pas à vous voir *viz-à-viz* de moi.” It is impossible not to perceive, and not to admire, the delicacy of this compliment. The conversation having turned on the principal events of the late war, he seized the occasion of doing justice to Laudohn’s merit; particularly in the battle of Cunerf-dorf, or as it is more commonly called here, of Francfort on the Oder; where he was totally defeated by Soltikoff and Laudohn, in August 1759. “Vous avez bien gaté ma soupe à Francfort,” said the King to him. “Je vous ai toujours trouvé au bout de ma Lorgnette,” added he at another time. Such recognitions of superior ability, mingled with encomium, do scarcely less honour to the magnanimity of the King, than to the talents and services of the General.

As a writer, Frederic is before the tribunal of the public, who have thought his pretensions

sions to literary fame by no means without foundation; though in his capacity of an author, he is not exempt from numerous prejudices and predilections. Those to whom the interests of revealed religion are dear, will however neither overlook, nor ought to pardon, the evident tendency of his writings; that of avowedly overturning and ridiculing Christianity. Even his wit is too frequently levelled at the same object. It is difficult to compose the history of our own times, and still more so the history of our own family, without great partialities and imperfections; a remark fully exemplified in the "*Memoires de la Maison de Brandebourg*." He has spoken too contemptuously of his grandfather Frederic the First, to whose vanity or ambition, it matters not which, is solely due the crown now worn by his successors. However little or puerile when strictly appreciated, might be the motives which impelled Frederic to aspire to the Royal, instead of contenting himself with the Electoral dignity, his descendants owe him great obligations.

Prince Eugene, when he was informed of the Emperor Leopold's having raised the Elector of Brandenburg to the rank of a crowned head ; exclaimed with reason, that " the Ministers who had given their Sovereign such pernicious counsel, merited death." He foresaw, near eighty years ago, the probable aggrandizement of the new monarchy to which Leopold had imprudently given birth, and time has confirmed his prediction.

The King is still continually occupied at this time, in literary pursuits and avocations. Like Cæsar, he means to write his own " Commentaries ;" and to transmit himself the history of his reign to posterity. Prince Frederic of Brunswic assures me, that he has himself frequently seen the continuation of the " Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg," in the handwriting of its author. It commences with his own accession to the crown ; and he prosecutes it not only every year, but almost every day. The Prince adds, that he has nevertheless his doubts, whether it will
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be made public, even after the King's decease. But, may we not safely trust to the vanity of the writer, for its being given to the world? He will probably take effectual precautions to secure the fame, which he has so dearly earned in the closet, as well as in the field.

The retirement in which he lives, and the small portion of time that he passes here at Berlin, render the particulars of his conduct and private life much more concealed, than those of other European Princes. Sovereigns, if not personally resident in their capitals, are however always accessible to curiosity and enquiry. They are usually surrounded with foreign Ministers, courtiers, women, and strangers, who transmit intelligence of their health, their actions, and their occupations, by every post. But Potsdam and "Sans Souci" offer no facilities of the kind. It is not permitted to the Envoy of any foreign State, to present himself before the King, unless upon special business, and

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after having obtained a formal permission for the purpose. Neither the Princess, nor Princesses of the blood, presume to intrude on his privacy, except by express invitation. No military officer, on the other hand, dares to be absent from Potsdam without his Majesty's leave ; and should any one venture to shew himself there, who did not compose part of the regular garrison, he would instantly be put under arrest, and severely punished. The Prince of Prussia, presumptive heir of the crown, is not less subjected to these rules, than the lowest subject. Frederic passes only a few weeks of every year at Berlin, during the carnival in January and February. He leaves his capital to the Queen, Court, and foreign Ministers ; but he will suffer no privileged spies about his own person, to send weekly information of his minutest actions to their respective cabinets. This obscurity, while it sharpens curiosity, wakens apprehension, and naturally operates to render him more formidable at a distance.

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His military talents and reputation rest on too firm a basis, to be easily shaken or contested. The defeats of Colin, of Hohenkirchen, and of Cunerſdorf, though principally to be attributed to the King himſelf, yet are loſt or obliterated in the long train of his victories; from that of Mollwitz, at the opening of his reign, to the one with which the laſt war concluded at Freyberg, in 1762. In moſt of theſe actions he was preſent; in many he expoſed his perſon with as much intrepidity, as Henry the Fourth manifeſted at Coutras, or at Ivry. It was undoubtedly requiſite that Frederic ſhould do ſo, in order to encourage his troops, who, led on by him, never calculated any diſparity of numbers. In every action with the Auſtrians or Ruſſians, he was always inferior in force. At Liſſa he was proportionably almoſt as much ſo, as Alexander was to Darius at Iſſus, or at Arbela. He may indeed, perhaps, be juſtly cenſured for having on a variety of occaſions truſted too much to fortune. A muſket-ball might in an inſtant have de-

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cided the fate, not merely of a battle, but in all probability of the family of Brandenburg, and of the Prussian monarchy. His brother William Augustus, though a very amiable and accomplished Prince, did not possess energy and talents adequate to so vast a national emergency as the "war of seven years." His son, the present heir apparent, then a minor and unexperienced, must have delegated every thing to his uncle Prince Henry. Had Frederic fallen at Colin, at Lignitz, or at Torgau, the consequences would have been incalculable. I am aware however, that the same observation will apply to every commander; but, not with equal force. More than twenty musket-balls passed through his hat or his cloaths, in the course of the war; and he received one on his breast at Torgau. Three horses were shot under him in different actions. He seemed to forget that he was mortal and vulnerable.

It is well known that the French grenadiers, who admired the heroic intrepidity of the present hereditary Prince of Brunswick,

wic, though exerted against themselves; used to cry out before they fired, whenever they saw him, "Monseigneur, evitez le feu!" But, the Croats and Cossacks, with whom Frederic was frequently engaged, were enemies much more ferocious. They would not only have selected him as a mark, and taken aim at him: his remains would have been treated by them with no more respect or ceremony, than the body of Richard the Third obtained from the Lancastrians, after the battle of Bosworth. Even the Austrians and Saxons were animated by personal antipathy towards him; particularly the latter, whose Sovereign and country, it must be owned, had cruelly suffered under the Prussian rapacity or depredations.

It mocks all calculation, when we reflect that in the course of seven campaigns, such as those between 1756 and 1762, he never received a wound of any consequence; nor was ever incapacitated by illness from commanding in person. Alexander and Charles the Twelfth were infinitely less favoured

favoured by fortune in both these respects. Yet Frederic's courage was equally ardent and sublime, with that of the Macedonian, or the Swedish Prince; while in cool, deliberate, philosophic valor, he probably exceeded either. He well knew that his fall and that of the state were nearly synonymous; but situated as he was, he likewise felt that only the most desperate efforts, aided by fortune, could extricate him from a situation which has not a parallel in the annals of the world. In the last resort he always carried about him the same remedy, to which Hannibal had recourse in the Court of Bithynia. He would no more have been carried prisoner to Vienna, than the Carthaginian General to Rome.

History presents no object so truly interesting as Frederic during the late war, opposed to two Empresses, and three Kings, making head at the same time, against Austria, Russia, Sweden, France, and Saxony, added to the German Empire. The immense disproportion of force between

tween the parties ; the length of time which the contest lasted ; the wonderful activity, energy, and resources displayed by Frederic ; finally, his triumphant termination of a war which threatened the total destruction of the family of Brandenburg ; all these circumstances tend to astonish and to fascinate the mind. It is probable that posterity will contemplate them with increased admiration, through the medium of time.

Great, however, as are his military talents, and justly-merited as the encomiums on them may be ; we should recollect that as a commander, he stood upon higher ground than other men. Amenable in case of failure to no tribunal, he could act without control, and could risk his crown at pleasure, on the event of a battle. He did so more than once. But, no General Officer would have dared to take upon him so awful a responsibility, or to commit to hazard so vast a stake. The superiority which his presence, activity, and decision of character gave him, over commanders acting by dele-

delegated power, was incalculable. Nor ought we to forget the discordant principles of the great league which he opposed during the late war. Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, his inveterate enemy, was counteracted at every step, by her nephew, the unfortunate Peter, heir to the Empire, whose attachment to Frederic equalled his aunt's antipathy. Daun and Soltikoff, the Russian and Austrian Generals, never acted in real union, or the Prussian monarchy must have fallen under the pressure. "The war of seven years" exemplifies in the most striking manner, how difficult it is for any combination of States to overturn a single Power, defended with spirit, and roused to great exertions.

His enemies assert besides, not without color of reason, that the King was guilty of many faults in the course of those campaigns, which detract not a little from his reputation as a General, and even as a man. His temerity, his inflexibility, or his imprudence, produced the greatest defeats which he experienced. Towards
Marshal

Marshal Schwerin he is accused of having behaved with injustice, if not with ingratitude. His treatment of Finck, in dismissing him after the surrender of his army at Maxen, was very severe. He more than once cashiered and imprisoned officers of distinguished merit, become grey in his service, upon capricious, false, and imaginary grounds. It is pretended with some truth, that he cannot bear a rival, even though that rival should be a brother: a subject on which I may have occasion to say more, when I speak of Prince Henry of Prussia. All these accusations only tend however to prove, that with some of the greatest qualities, he is not exempt from many of the errors and defects attached to human nature.

It is a very disputable point, whether Frederic is naturally generous or penurious. Perhaps, from character he inclines to frugality; but from policy at least, he knows how to give with munificence on proper occasions. If we appreciate the generosity of Princes; if we reflect from
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what source its means are principally derived; and if we consider the objects on which it is frequently lavished, we shall incline to approve, rather than censure, the King's parsimony of the public treasure. He has besides, peculiar justifications of the most cogent kind. His barren provinces, for such the greater portion of them may with truth be denominated, cannot maintain an immense army, and an expensive Court. He sacrifices therefore splendor, parade, and ostentation, to real greatness. Manufactures, arts, agriculture, population, are the objects on which he expends his revenues. He is not only free from debt, and possessed of vast funds ready for emergency; but his dominions have in a great measure recovered the ravages and calamities of the late war. A wise administration, in the short space of only fifteen years, has rendered him capable of bringing into the field a more numerous, and better appointed army, than he had at the commencement of hostilities in 1756. Such
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are the effects of rigid and systematical economy!

If however, it were necessary to cite examples of his generosity, many well-attested instances are to be found. Towards the wife of his friend Guichart, (whom he named in ridicule Quintus Icilius, and who is better known by that denomination,) he behaved with great liberality. Guichart enjoyed during many years, a distinguished place in Frederic's intimacy, was constantly at his table, and usually remained the last of any person in his chamber, after he was in bed. They had frequent quarrels, followed by as frequent reconciliations. After Guichart's death, the King bought his library, for which he paid near fifteen hundred pounds sterling to his widow. He added besides, a present to her of six thousand dollars, and a pension of four thousand more. General Leschwitz, an officer of high merit, who had rendered many services in the course of the late war, received from him no remuneration during several

several years: but when he least expected it, he was agreeably surprized by a donation of lands from his master, worth more than twenty thousand pounds sterling. It was accompanied by a letter that enhanced its value, couched in the most gracious and affectionate terms. Officers, whose conduct and circumstances render them proper objects of his attention, frequently receive pecuniary proofs of his bounty. It must however, on the other hand, be admitted, that he is capable of imbibing very insurmountable prejudices. Like his father, he is irascible, capricious, inflexible, violent in his aversions; and consequently he is on many occasions oppressive, unfeeling, and unjust: infirmities of character which augment, as is too natural, with his years and bodily complaints.

In no respect, perhaps, is his administration more unwise, as well as more odious, than in his commercial regulations. He injures trade, and impoverishes every class of his subjects, by the imposition of

exorbitant duties. Even the mode of their collection is unpopular and impolitic, as he employs French custom-house officers, who are naturally objects of general detestation. This system, equally erroneous and pernicious, to which nevertheless Frederic pertinaciously adheres; forms a problem hard to solve, in the conduct of a Prince so enlightened, and so capable of justly appreciating his true interests. The fact is certain, that commerce declines, not only at Konigsberg, Stettin, and Memel; but, universally throughout his dominions. The King has, it is true, principles relative to trade, which if they were only carried into practice, are excellent. He professes to consider all monopolies as destructive and injurious; yet, by an unaccountable inconsistency, no country abounds in them so much as Prussia. The immoderate duties, laid upon almost every article of import or export, ruin the merchant.

The partition of Poland five years ago, by which so fertile, populous, and extensive

a tract of country was added to the Prussian Crown ; it was naturally supposed, would enrich the city of Konigsberg. That capital, from its position, vicinity, and local advantages, seemed to be so placed, as necessarily to attract the trade of the newly acquired provinces. I am assured nevertheless, by persons whose testimony is unexceptionable, that so far from having derived any benefit by the seizure of Polish Prussia ; on the contrary, their commercial advantages are diminished since that event. The causes are simple, obvious, and evident. The part of Poland which previously furnished Konigsberg with the most valuable articles of exportation, is, in consequence of the late dismemberment, become subject to the empire of Russia. Of course, its productions are carried down the Duna to Riga, instead of being transported as heretofore, by the rivers Ruse and Pregel, to Konigsberg. I am far from asserting that the Royal revenues have received no increase by the acquisition of Polish Prussia ; on the contrary,

trary, they are much enlarged. But, the Sovereign may be rich, while the majority of the people are poor, oppressed, and wretched: a truth which is exemplified in many parts of the Prussian dominions.

On a review of the King's character, we cannot mistake the master-spring of all his actions. Every passion and every pursuit are evidently subordinate to the aggrandizement of his House; to the security and augmentation of his political power. Russia, Saxony, Sweden, England, and France, have been by turns his allies or his enemies, as circumstances have varied. The Cabinet of Vienna alone he considers as systematically inimical. Never was a Prince more calculated to elevate the family of Brandenburg, at the expence of that of Austria. Silesia, the first conquest of his arms, has been retained against the utmost exertions of Maria Theresa, by eleven campaigns, by torrents of human blood, and by the greatest efforts of military skill, He has since acquired another province

still more fertile, and hardly less extensive, Polish Prussia. It comprehends the course of the river Vistula, from the gates of Thorn to those of Dantzic: and renders him master of the most valuable exports of Poland. He has, in a word, materially altered the balance of power in Europe; and nearly doubled in extent, as well as in revenues, the territories which devolved to him at the death of his father, about thirty-seven years ago.

Upon no European Sovereign are the regards of mankind directed with so much apprehension and solicitude, as on Frederic. From his retreat at "Sans Souci," though infirm and declined in years, he still awes the Cabinets of the North, who know by experience his promptitude and resources. At this moment he has somewhat above two hundred thousand effective soldiers under arms, immense magazines, experienced commanders, well-regulated revenues, and an ample treasure. If to so many points of superiority, we add his personal repu-

reputation, and the discipline of his troops, we shall not wonder that he is formidable to his neighbours. To his subjects he is rather an object of admiration, not wholly unmixed with terror, than of affection. They derive a national vanity from the fame, the conquests, and the talents of so great a Prince; but they pay dearly for his celebrity and achievements. It is at the price of their tranquillity that he has gained his laurels; it is by the same sacrifice that he must maintain them.

The augmentation of the Prussian monarchy brings with it no relaxation of taxes, no alleviation of burdens. On the contrary, new levies and greater armies are requisite, in order to support his acquisitions. He is compelled to stretch the nerves of the state, and to exert efforts above its natural strength. The vicinity and jealousy of Austria, added to the prodigious extent of territory possessed by Maria Theresa, render his tenure of Silesia in no small degree insecure. While Frederic

himself survives, to regulate the machine which with so much labour and ability he has constructed, all things may continue prosperous. But, it is difficult to calculate how far his death will convulse or disjoint a complicated system, demanding such a variety of talents. There are not wanting persons here, as well as all over Germany, who consider the termination of his life, as the æra from which will be dated the decline and fall of the Prussian monarchy. Time alone can shew whether these predictions are founded in truth.

The portrait of Frederic which I have endeavoured to trace, is, I am conscious, very imperfect. There are many features of his mind and character, on which I have not touched, or over which I have passed lightly. In order to do complete justice to the merits and demerits of such a Prince, we must stand at a greater distance from him. It does not belong to the present age to decide finally, whether he is, or is not entitled to the epithet of *Great*. Louis
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the Fourteenth has been already despoiled of that title, conferred on him by the adulation of his cotemporaries. Peter the First has retained it by universal consent. Posterity will pass sentence on Frederic, and will judge of him impartially. Perhaps I have not been able to do so altogether myself. If I were called upon however, to declare whether the picture which I have here drawn, is on the whole, a flattering, or an unfavourable likeness, I should not hesitate to say that it leans towards the former. Or at least, that I could without violating truth, have somewhat darkened the shades, and diminished the lights: but it is an ungrateful task to seek for and disclose the vices, while we dwell with satisfaction on the great endowments of the sovereign and the man.

LETTER V.

Review of the principal campaigns of Frederic the Second.—Mollwitz.—Anecdote of Marshal Neuperg.—Löwositz.—Battle of Prague.—Anecdotes respecting it.—Character of Marshal Daun.—Particulars of the battle of Colin.—Rosbach.—Lissa.—Siege of Olmutz.—Zorndorf.—Battle of Hohkirchen.—Death of Marshal Keith.—Particulars of the battle of Cunersdorf.—Surrender of Finck, at Maxen.—Landshut.—Lignitz.—Battle of Torgau.—Desperate situation of the King in 1761.—Death of Elizabeth, Empress of Russia.—Freyberg.—Peace of Hubertsburg.—Reflections on the King's conduct during the war.—His treatment of the Saxons.—Constitution of the Prussian army.—Foreign Troops.—Desertion.—Jews.—Invalids.

BERLIN, October 29th, 1777.

AFTER having contemplated the King himself in so many points of view, it may still be an instructive occupation, to survey the brilliant portions of his reign. The campaigns in which the Prussian monarchy

narchy has been hazarded, or by which it has been preserved and extended since his accession, are so numerous, as to furnish matter of inexhaustible reflection. Of the officers who distinguished themselves in the first and second Silesian wars, between 1741 and 1745, few indeed now remain. Except Frederic himself, the old Prince of Bevern, and Ziethen, hardly a General of eminence has survived. But, the events of the late war which began in 1756, are still recent; and they form a pleasing, as well as a frequent subject of conversation in every company. Let us cast our eye rapidly over its principal features, which offer the most animating picture ever presented to the human mind. In Antiquity, the second Punic war can alone be opposed to it for duration, as well as for interest and importance.

The great enterprize by which Frederic rendered himself known to foreign nations, almost immediately after his accession, was the invasion of Silesia. We must not perhaps,

perhaps, examine too closely, whether it was perfectly just or magnanimous to attack a Princess with whom he had no quarrel; and whose distressed situation rather claimed protection, than ought to have provoked hostility. His pretensions to Silesia were unquestionably founded, though they were of an antient date, and were only revived from the apparent facility which the death of the Emperor Charles the Sixth offered, for making them effective. The battle of Mollwitz, a little village in Upper Silesia, confirmed to Prussia that valuable acquisition. It took place on the 10th of April 1741, and is the first general action in which the King was ever present; though he had served under Prince Eugene, in the Imperial army, before Philipsburg, during the inglorious campaign of 1734. Marshal Neuperg commanded the Austrians at Mollwitz; the superiority of whose cavalry had nearly decided the fortune of the day, and perhaps the future fate of Frederic himself. It is admitted that he
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was borne away in the rout of his troops; and it is not less certain that to the abilities of Schwerin, he was principally indebted for snatching from the Austrian General the victory, which he had almost gained. Those who attribute the King's flight to personal motives unbecoming him, must however know his character very imperfectly. Any such imputation is contradicted by the whole tenor of his life. But it is asserted, and I believe not without reason, that he never cordially forgave Schwerin for having rendered a service too important in itself, as well as too wounding to the vanity of a Sovereign such as Frederick.

More than two years afterwards, in 1743, his late Britannic Majesty George the Second, being at his head-quarters at Worms, a short time subsequent to the battle of Dettingen; entertained at dinner a number of English, Austrian, and Hanoverian officers. The battle of Mollwitz having been mentioned in the course of conversation, the King, either by accident

or by intention, asked of those who sat near him, what General commanded the Austrians in that action? Marshal Neuperg was one of the persons present, and immediately laying down his knife and fork; "C'est moi, Sire," said he, "qui ai commandé dans cette bataille, et je l'ai perdu par ma propre faute." So ingenuous and so unexpected an avowal, produced an universal silence. The King himself seemed to be embarrassed and concerned. "I repeat, Sire," continued the Marshal, "that I lost the battle by my own fault. The Croats, upon whose vigilance and alertness to discover the motions of the enemy, I relied too implicitly, deceived me. I had posted parties of them upon every road by which the Prussians could possibly advance; but they abandoned themselves to pillage and intoxication. Notice was brought me that his Prussian Majesty, at the head of his forces, prepared to give me battle. But, not having received any intelligence from my Croats, I could not credit the information.

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“ formation. It was not till the Prussian
“ columns were preparing to form, that
“ my own eyes undeceived me. I then
“ made the best dispositions in my power;
“ and if they were not as successful as they
“ might have been, I only am to blame.”
A nobleman who was present on the occasion, recounted to me this fact, which redounds highly to the honour of Marshal Neuperg’s candour and superiority of mind, however it may seem to detract from his military reputation.

The two Silesian wars, as they are commonly denominated, from the name of the province which formed the subject of contest; were succeeded by a period of repose that lasted eleven years. This is the golden age of Prussia, when the King, in the prime of life, covered with laurels earned in the field, cultivated the arts of peace, and seemed to have renounced a wish for further conquests. Content with having added an extensive and beautiful province to his dominions, he aspired only to preserve,

serve, and transmit it to his successors. But, the Court of Vienna, which never for a moment lost sight of Silesia, secretly meditated, in conjunction with that of Dresden, to reduce the power of Prussia. Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, impelled more by motives of personal animosity towards Frederic, than from any political reasons, joined Maria Theresa. Sweden likewise declared war, almost without pretext. The German empire followed its Elective Head; and even France, which for ages had been the enemy of Austria, laboured to destroy the only power which could set limits to its ambition.

Frederic, instead of deprecating so vast a combination, or temporizing till the storm was passed; having penetrated their intentions, did not hesitate to anticipate them. With his usual decision of character, he burst in upon Saxony during the summer of 1756, and made himself master of Dresden; while Augustus the Third, unable to oppose the torrent, retired with his

his forces to Pirna, where his army occupied a post deemed inattackable. The King leaving a body of troops to block the Saxon camp, rapidly entered Bohemia, where the Austrians were advancing to extricate their allies. Under these circumstances took place the battle of Lowositz, on the first of October. It was fought among the mountains and defiles, upon the direct road from Dresden to Prague; and the King shared no less the danger than the honour. With inferior numbers and under great disadvantages of ground, he attacked, broke, and at length drove the enemy from their position. Marshal Count Brown, who commanded the troops of Maria Theresa, has been much censured for the dispositions which he made at Lowositz. He was nevertheless, a General of distinguished merit and great experience; though perhaps too active and enterprising in his temper, when it is considered that he was to oppose such an antagonist as the King of Prussia.

Lowositz

Lowositz cannot however be reckoned among the number of those decisive victories, in which the rout of the beaten army is complete. Far from being vanquished, the Austrians only retired on the ensuing day, and took a new position behind the river Eger, a few miles distant; nor did Frederic, at so advanced a season, venture to prosecute his advantage. But, all the fruits of victory attended it, since he thereby incapacitated Marshal Brown from coming to the assistance of the Saxons. That unfortunate body of forces, surrounded on all sides at Pirna, not far from Dresden, destitute of provisions, and cut off from succours; after holding out to the last extremity, were reduced to surrender themselves prisoners of war. Augustus the Third, King of Poland, abandoning his hereditary dominions, had previously set out for Warsaw; leaving his Queen and his family to the mercy of the conqueror, as Darius did after the battle of Issus. If Frederic did not equal Alexander in courtesy towards his

his captives ; yet, by this able and decisive stroke, at the commencement of the contest, he turned the weapons of the enemy against themselves ; covered Brandenburg, while he became master of Saxony ; and was enabled to begin the campaign of 1757, by offensive operations in the heart of Bohemia.

That extraordinary campaign, the most fertile in battles, reverses, and great events, of any presented by modern history, opened with the memorable irruption of Frederic into Bohemia, and the battle of Prague, fought under the walls of the city itself on the 6th of May. Few actions have been more obstinately disputed ; and there was a moment, when victory seemed on the point of declaring in favour of the Austrians. Marshal Count Brown commanded them, conjointly with Prince Charles of Lorrain. To the desperate courage, and perhaps to the sensibility of Marshal Schwerin, the Prussians were eminently indebted for the victory which they gained. It is unquestionable that the infantry under his com-

mand gave way, and appeared ready to turn their backs. The King, indignant at the fight, and rendered almost frantic by the prospect of defeat, rode up to the Marshal, and reproached him in severe terms, for the misbehaviour of his troops. Touched to the quick by treatment so unmerited, Schwerin instantly seized the standard of his regiment; and imitating the example of the Decii, devoted himself to death. Rushing into the thickest ranks of the Austrians, he called on his soldiers to follow him. They did so with enthusiasm, and soon snatched from the enemy their temporary advantages. But Schwerin was killed almost immediately, by three balls which he received in the breast, one of which pierced his heart. He was not less deeply lamented by his master, than was Le Fort by Peter the Great; and Frederic has immortalized the circumstances of his death, by erecting a statue to his memory, in one of the principal squares of Berlin. Schwerin is there represented as he fell, the colours clasped in his hand, and in the act of

of expiring. The monument commemorates at once the frailty of the Sovereign, and the merits of the General.

Prince Charles Lichtenstein, who was present in the battle of Prague, and who held at that time a distinguished rank in the Austrian cavalry, has related to me many interesting particulars respecting the engagement. The weather had been for some days previous, uncommonly hot and dry. Nothing could exceed the clouds of dust which flew up after the action commenced; and when the left wing, which was under Prince Charles of Lorraine's command, retreated precipitately into Prague, the whirlwinds of dust grew so violent, that it became almost impossible any longer to distinguish the blue, from the white uniforms. Marshal Brown having received a wound from a cannon ball, which splintered his leg, the confusion augmented among the Austrians, who fled on every side. Frederic, victorious, laid siege to Prague, and seemed to be on the point of making prisoners the army shut up

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in the city. But, fortune, joined to his own temerity, extricated the Empress Queen from a situation so full of danger.

Prince Charles Lichtenstein told me that he had a brother named Philip, who served, as well as himself, in the Imperial troops, and who fell in the action. No man in the army was of more unquestionable courage, or more warmly attached to his profession. It being probable, from the rapid march and dispositions of the King of Prussia, that he intended, as soon as he was joined by Schwerin, to attack the Austrians; every preparation was made, and every requisite order was issued by Marshal Brown, on the evening preceding the battle. The principal officers were enjoined to be at their respective posts by day-break; and Prince Charles having been on horseback for several hours, had retired to his tent, meaning to take some repose. But, scarcely had he lain down and fallen asleep, when he was awakened by his brother Philip, who shook him, and told him that he had something to impart of moment. “Do it then quickly,” answered

answered he, “ for I am very sleepy, and
“ we shall be called betimes to-morrow.”
“ Charles,” said Prince Philip, “ I believe
“ you do not doubt my courage, nor
“ think me capable of being depressed at
“ the prospect of a battle ; but I have been
“ so unaccountably dejected all day, and
“ I am so certain I shall fall to-morrow in
“ the field, that I could enjoy no tran-
“ quillity of mind till I had come to you.
“ I have some directions to give relative
“ to my concerns, which I must entreat
“ you to receive, and then I shall be per-
“ fectly at ease.” Prince Charles was,
however, so far from complying with his
brother’s desire, that he rallied him on his
weakness, refused to listen to him, and
sent him away to his quarters ; desiring
him, not to interrupt any more his repose,
as he should have so much occupation on
the ensuing day. Thus repulsed, Philip
reluctantly withdrew to his tent ; while
his brother, like Don Mathias de Sylva in
“ Gil Blas,” soon relapsed into a sound
sleep.

From this state he was a second time roused by Prince Philip, though not without difficulty. "It is in vain, Charles," said he, "that you treat me with levity; my hour is come, and to-morrow I shall fall. I must insist upon it therefore, that you take down my last requests. They shall be very brief, and cannot detain you beyond a few minutes." Half asleep, as well as out of humour at being so disturbed, Prince Charles at length took a pencil, and committed to paper some heads of testamentary dispositions dictated by his brother. They respected principally his mistress and his creditors; which being done, he again retired. On the following day he received a wound from a musket ball, and was carried to his tent; whence after having been dressed, he insisted on returning to the field. The surgeon and attendants endeavoured to withhold him; but, neither entreaties nor expostulations could prevent his following the impulse of his courage. He soon received a second wound,

wound, which terminated his life in the prime of youth. Had he escaped unhurt, his prediction would have been considered only as an idle dream, and never commemorated. Its accidental accomplishment impresses it on the imagination.

I return to the King of Prussia. If that Prince would have been satisfied to prosecute the siege of Prague with vigour, it is highly probable that he must have become master of the place, and consequently have made Prince Charles of Lorraine and his army prisoners. Or, if renouncing the attempt, he had only pursued without delay the flying enemy, during the first impression of their defeat; it is not less probable that he might have carried all before him, to the banks of the Danube. The Austrians required time to rally, and to collect new forces; by allowing it them, Frederic committed an irreparable error. Relying too much on his past success, and trusting to fortune, he ventured to leave a part of his army before Prague, while he marched in person to give battle with the remainder.

At this critical juncture Daun came forward, the Fabius of the Austrians, who by his constitutional caution, was wonderfully well adapted to make head against a Prince of Frederic's character. He was of a noble family, and had long served with distinction in the Imperial forces. Naturally phlegmatic, and often irresolute, he required to be impelled, rather than restrained. Of insurmountable coolness, no dangers ruffled, and no reverses depressed him. In his friend General Lacy, who accompanied him, he found the qualities which nature had denied to himself; decision, activity, and energy. To Lacy's advice and exhortations, was due much of the fame acquired by Daun, who highly esteemed him, and consulted him on all occasions of emergency.

The stories which are related of Daun's self-possession, excite a degree of admiration, and almost of incredulity. Count Stuart, an officer of Scotch extraction, who served under him during a great part of the war; assured me that at the battle of Hohenkirchen
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in 1758, he saw Daun giving some directions to a colonel of artillery, when a cannon ball took off his head. The Marshal, though he was so close as to be covered with the blood, neither turned aside, nor uttered a word, nor made the smallest motion. Perfectly calm, he only addressed himself to the next artillery officer in rank, ordering him to execute the commission with which he had charged the other. It is well known that on another occasion, riding out with General Serbelloni to reconnoitre the Prussian forces, they were repeatedly fired at by parties posted in the hedges. The shot flying about their heads, Daun was preparing to retire; but Serbelloni, who was pointing with his finger to an object which he wished the Marshal to remark, exclaimed, "Ces ne sont que des mouches." An instant afterwards, a shot shattered his hand: Daun turning quietly round, only said, "Il me paroît au moins, que les mouches ont piqués."

It

It was at Colin that Frederic for the first time fully experienced the instability of fortune. His preceding victories had somewhat intoxicated him, and induced him to trust too much to the superiority of his arms. Marshal Brown having been rendered incapable of commanding, in consequence of his wound; and Prince Charles of Lorraine being shut up in Prague; Daun collected the scattered remains of the Austrians, who were soon joined by new forces. About eleven o'clock in the morning of the 18th of June 1757, his Prussian Majesty appeared in sight. Daun's head-quarters were stationed at the little village of Chotzemitz, near the town of Colin, on an eminence; whence, with a telescope in his hand, he attentively surveyed every disposition of the enemy. He remarked them long in silence; at length taking the glass from his eye, "Ma foi," said he, "il me semble que le Roi doit perdre aujourd'hui."

Frederic

Frederic began the attack, after a variety of manœuvres, at two in the afternoon. The Austrians, on the first charge, were thrown into such confusion, that Marshal Daun, apprehensive of an entire defeat, issued orders for securing his retreat, and for removing the artillery without delay. But, two regiments of Saxons newly raised, consisting principally of young recruits who had scarcely seen any service, were highly instrumental in checking the ardour of the Prussians. They repulsed, and finally drove back the enemy. Another circumstance impossible to have been foreseen, materially contributed to decide the fate the action in favour of Daun. One of the Prussian columns as it marched up, was annoyed by a party of Croats stationed in a wood, who kept up a brisk fire on their flank. The King informed of it, dispatched an Aide-de-camp to order a regiment of the column to enter the wood, and to dislodge the Croats. But, the officer who carried the message, forgot, or neglected to
cause

cause the column to advance. On the contrary, it was stopped for a considerable time, while the regiment sent to attack the Croats, executed that commission. If instead of halting, the column had rapidly filled up the interval, advanced, opened, and formed; it was supposed they might have done great execution, perhaps have totally changed the aspect of affairs. When at last they came up, it was too late to be of any effectual service. The King made several desperate efforts to force the Austrian lines; but, his troops, disheartened and fatigued, could not be induced to continue their attacks. Towards eight in the evening the action ceased, the Prussians fled, and the rout became general. Frederic was compelled to raise the siege of Prague precipitately and to retire in some disorder towards the confines of Saxony.

Never was victory more opportunely gained, nor more important in its consequences. The army, inclosed within the walls of Prague, pressed by famine, and diminished

diminished by sickness, could not long have held out the place. Neither, if Daun had been vanquished at Colin, could any new body of forces have been speedily opposed to the Prussians. They might have advanced to the vicinity of Vienna, and driven Maria Theresa from her capital, as had been done before by the French and Bavarians. So signal a service justly procured Daun prodigious reputation, and the death of Marshal Brown placed him in the supreme command of the Austrian armies. Brown expired at Prague, in consequence of his wound, accelerated by a consumptive habit of body. His enemies pretended that the chagrin which he felt at Daun's extraordinary success, when contrasted with his own recent defeats at Prague, and at Lowofitz, hastened his end. He affected however, to participate in the general congratulations on the victory of Colin; and as a testimony of his esteem for Daun, he ordered his best English horse to be carried to that commander, as soon as he received the

the intelligence. He survived it only a few days.

A melancholy reverse succeeded to the late rapid conquests of Frederic. Instead of over-running Bohemia, and penetrating into Austria, as he expected to have done, he could scarcely maintain himself in Saxony. The victorious troops of Daun not only pressed upon his rear, but in a great measure recovered Silesia. On the other side advanced to attack him the army of the German Empire, united with the forces of France. The same Prince, who in June appeared to be on the point of dictating peace at the gates of Vienna ; before the close of October, doubted whether he should be able to defend his patrimonial dominions from the attacks of his enemies. But the campaign of 1757 exhibits from its commencement to its termination, an unparalleled chain of reverses and vicissitudes. At the moment when winter was already begun, Frederic, by two decisive victories completely extricated

cated his affairs, and resumed his former ascendancy.

Rosbach, a little village not far from the banks of the river Saal in Thuringia, was the scene of the first of these memorable actions. It took place on the fifth of November; and like the "battle of the Spurs," in the sixteenth century, might rather be denominated a rout than an engagement. The allied army had two chiefs; the forces of the Empire being commanded by the Prince of Saxe-Hilburghausen, while the French auxiliary troops were under the orders of the Prince of Soubise. The superiority of the Prussian manœuvres was aided no less by the temerity of the enemy previous to the engagement, than by their subsequent panic. Scarcely did they resist for more than half an hour. During the interview between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, in 1770, at Neustadt in Moravia, Frederic gave the former a most humorous and ludicrous description of the battle of Rosbach; in

in the course of which he treated the French with the utmost severity. General Nostitz, who was present, assured me of the fact. Indeed, whatever may be his Prussian Majesty's partiality towards the nation, he is known to hold their discipline and tactics in the utmost contempt.

But the victory at Rosbach, however brilliant, by no means liberated the King from his difficulties. It was necessary to gain another not less decisive, over the Austrians; who, after taking Schweidnitz, had attacked and defeated the Prussians, entrenched under the cannon of Breslau. That city itself, the capital of Silesia, unable to resist an army of eighty thousand men, had surrendered; while the shattered remains of the Prince of Bevern's small force was reduced to abandon any further attempt to stop their progress. Such was still the desperate situation of his affairs in Silesia, when Frederic gained the battle of Lissa, on the 4th of December. The incapacity and misconduct

of Prince Charles of Lorrain, who commanded the Austrian forces, enabled the King, with inferior numbers, and in the space of less than three hours, nearly to annihilate that formidable army. Instead of remaining within his entrenchments, where he would have been inattackable, Prince Charles unnecessarily advanced, and offered battle. Silesia was the prize for which they contended, and it immediately returned to the conqueror. Scarcely could the survivors of the defeat at Lissa, reduced to one-third of their original numbers, reach Bohemia; where, I am assured, twenty thousand Austrians were carried into the hospitals.

Prince Joseph Lobkowitz, who was present in the action, was sent on the following morning to the field of battle; a suspension of arms for twenty-four hours having been granted, in order to allow time to bury the dead. The cold of the night was extremely severe; and I have

heard him say, that the spectacle which presented itself was such as no language could well describe; great numbers of the men and horses who had fallen on the preceding day, being hard frozen, and their limbs fixed in the attitudes of pain or distortion in which they had expired. Nor was the flight of the Austrians after the engagement, less destructive than the action itself. Compelled, almost destitute of baggage or necessaries, to pass the defiles which separate Silesia from Bohemia, thousands sunk under the weight of their arms, and perished amidst the snows, of hunger, cold, and fatigue; or were massacred by the peasants. After five great battles, in four of which the King had been present, and in three of which he had been victorious; he still retained possession of Saxony, had reconquered Silesia, and menaced the Empress Queen with a new irruption into her dominions, on the return of spring.

The

The campaign of 1758, less brilliant and varied than the one which we have just reviewed, displays nevertheless, the firm character and vast resources of Frederic, under circumstances the most adverse, augmented by defeat. After retaking Schweidnitz, the only remaining acquisition of the enemy, he burst unexpectedly into Moravia, and invested Olmutz, the capital. Had he succeeded, nothing could have prevented his penetrating to Vienna. It is however, the opinion of almost every officer, Prussian, Austrian, or Saxon, with whom I ever conversed, that the King acted injudiciously in directing his arms against Moravia. If, instead of undertaking a siege so hazardous and difficult as Olmutz, he had entered Bohemia early in May, no effectual opposition could have been made to him by Marshal Daun, whose army was still in the hospitals. But while the Prussians continued before Olmutz, that commander assembled his troops. Laudohn, who afterwards signalized himself

so much, having defeated a convoy of provisions on its way to the Prussian camp, compelled Frederic to renounce his enterprize. He retired; but it was the retreat of a Lion, who turns upon his pursuers, Frustrated, not vanquished; formidable even in defeat; carrying with him all his artillery and his baggage, he left to Daun little more than a negative triumph.

New and equally formidable enemies waited for him on the banks of the Oder, whom it was necessary to expel from his dominions. The Muscovites, after ravaging the kingdom of Prussia, had entered Brandenburg, and were advancing towards Berlin, conducted by General Fermer. Frederic gave them battle at the little village of Zorndorf, not far from Custrin upon the Oder; and it might be termed a carnage, rather than an action. Neither the fury of his artillery, the valor and discipline of his infantry, nor the repeated charges of his cavalry, could compel the Russians to recede a foot; much less to turn their
backs,

backs, or take to flight. During near thirteen hours, from six in the morning till seven in the evening of the 25th of August, they withstood, unmoved, every effort of the Prussian tactics. After the slaughter of twenty-one thousand men, they still disdained to retreat, and night alone terminated the combat. But the Russian commander, by immediately falling back towards Poland, while he seemed to yield the honor of the victory to Frederic, allowed him time to fly to the assistance of his brother.

It was become indispensable to extricate Prince Henry, whom Daun had already surrounded in the vicinity of Dresden. The King's approach effected it; but, not content with obliging the Austrians to abandon their project, he rashly attempted to cut off their communication with Bohemia. Regardless of the advice and remonstrances of Marshal Keith, he persisted for that purpose to occupy a position at the village of Hohkirchen, near Bautzen, in Lusatia. Keith predicted to him

that he would be there attacked by Daun, and asserted that the post was untenable against superior numbers. His apprehensions were flighted by the King, and the event foretold, took place. Favored by the night and a thick fog, Daun, on the 14th of October, surprized the Prussian camp, drove their troops from the heights of Hohkirchen, and gained a signal victory. But the King's greatest and most irreparable loss was that of Keith himself, who, after having rallied the soldiers, and performed for more than three hours all the functions of a consummate General, fell in the church-yard of the village, mortally wounded.

Marshal Keith was born in Scotland, of a very ancient and noble family, which, unhappily, from principles of generous, but mistaken attachment to the exiled house of Stuart, engaged in the rebellion of 1715, against George the First. Obligated to quit his native country, he entered into the service of Russia, where
he

he rose to the rank of Field-Marshal ; and afterwards passed into that of Frederic the Second. By him, who knew how to appreciate, and to value merit, Keith was not less beloved than respected. All his exertions to wrest the victory from Daun at Hohkirchen, were unsuccessful. His body, after he fell, stripped and naked, was carried into the church of the village, and laid upon a barrow, covered with a Croat's cloak. When all resistance on the part of the Prussians was completely at an end, and their army dispersed ; Marshal Daun, accompanied by Lacy and several other officers entered the church. Seeing a dead body exposed on a barrow, and conceiving it to be some person of distinction, he enquired who it was ? Lacy approached the corpse, and after attentively regarding it, exclaimed with great emotion, " Alas ! 'tis my father's best friend, 'tis Keith ! " The late Marshal Lacy and he had both been in the service of Russia, had made more than one campaign together,

under the reign of the Empress Anne, and had lived on terms of intimate friendship. At so melancholy a piece of intelligence, Daun burst into tears, as did Lacy, and every person present. How affecting a moment; and how sublime, as well as touching a subject, for the pencil of an artist!

While they were paying this tribute of respect and sympathy to the remains of Keith, a Croat made his appearance, dressed in the Marshal's uniform, and having across his breast the yellow riband of the Prussian order of the "Black Eagle." Daun desiring to know how he came by those spoils, "I took them," answered the Croat, "from the man who lies yonder, whom I killed and stripped. I have given him my cloak." The corpse was scarcely in the least disfigured, or bloody; nor was it without some difficulty, and after considerable search, that the wound which he had received, was discoverable. A musket-ball had penetrated his

his side, or flank, but the orifice was hardly perceptible, and only marked by a small purple spot. As he fell on his back, he had bled inwardly.

Daun having instantly ordered out three regiments under arms, caused him to be interred with all the military honours due to his high rank and his distinguished merit. On the ensuing day the Marshal received a letter from his Prussian Majesty, brought by a trumpet. In it, Frederic, after congratulating him on his late victory, and complimenting him on the manœuvres which had conduced to so signal a success, requested him to render every military honor to the remains of the great man, whom it had been his misfortune to lose. The Austrian commander in his reply besought the King to believe, that he had not waited for his royal commands on such a point; but had already paid to the deceased Marshal every mark of respect in his power. Frederic, in his letter to Daun, made no mention whatever of Prince Francis of Brunswic,

Brunswic, his own brother-in-law, who had likewise fallen in the same action. Sir Robert Keith, (now envoy at Vienna, and so well known by his spirited conduct in Denmark during the revolution in 1772,) has lately erected in the church of Hohkirchen, an elegant marble monument to the memory of his relation, Marshal Keith. Every particular relative to his death, here enumerated, was imparted to me by an Austrian officer of distinction who was present.

If the King cannot be exempted from censure for persisting, in contradiction to Keith's advice, to occupy the camp at Hohkirchen, he is not less to be admired for the celerity and skill with which he repaired his defeat. Far from reconquering Silesia, or even expelling him from Saxony, Daun found him equally formidable as before the late misfortune. When he attempted to besiege Neiss, and afterwards to attack Dresden, Frederic obliged him to renounce both enterprizes, and finally to

fall back upon Bohemia. The army of the Empire, which nearly at the same time made a feeble effort to regain their honor lost at Rosbach, was easily repulsed: while the Swedes, who only half a century before had triumphantly overrun Poland, Russia, and Saxony, under Charles the Twelfth, were compelled to retire precipitately from Pomerania. If the campaign of 1758 had been more disastrous to Frederic than the preceding one, it had likewise manifested in a conspicuous manner his prodigious resources. The next was destined to put him to still severer trials.

Daun no longer engaged in 1759, the principal attention of the King. Content with watching his motions, with covering Silesia, and defending Saxony, Frederic directed his most active exertions against another enemy. The Russians, led by Soltikoff, who had replaced their former commander; after defeating General Wedel at Zullichau, near Crossen on the Oder, had continued their march toward Berlin.

It

It was marked by ravages of every kind; and the King, irritated to a pitch of desperation at the defeat of Wedel, resolved to give them once more battle. The Oder, which had been twice the scene of these conflicts, witnessed a third engagement not less sanguinary, and still more memorable from its termination. All the preceding disasters which Frederic had experienced, were light in comparison with the defeat that he sustained at Cunerfdorf.

Apprehensive from the motions of the Prussian army, that the King meditated an attack on Soltikoff, Marshal Daun detached Laudohn to join him, at the head of twelve thousand Austrians and Saxons, principally cavalry. The junction was effected, not without difficulty, a very few days before the engagement. On the afternoon immediately preceding it Soltikoff and Laudohn rode out together, in order to reconnoitre the enemy. As it was evident that the King meant to bring on a battle, Soltikoff took occasion to explain

plain to his colleague, the dispositions which he intended to make for receiving the Prussians. He pointed out at the same time the position in which he should wait for the attack, and the point against which, he conceived, it would be principally directed. Laudohn, though he coincided with him in opinion, enquired nevertheless, what measures he had taken for covering or securing his retreat, in case of a disaster? "None whatever," replied Soltikoff; "the Russians are unacquainted with retreats; they always either conquer or die."

On the following morning, the twelfth of August, Frederic attacked the entrenched camp at Cunerisdorf. His greatest efforts were directed against their flank, at the only point where it was accessible, by a narrow opening through a morass. Two Russian regiments, stationed in the pass, long sustained without giving way, the onset of the Prussian army: they were at length put to the sword, and fell in
their

their ranks. Soltikoff proposed therefore to Laudohn, that a regiment of Austrians should march into the vacant space, along side of a regiment of his own troops. But the Austrian foldiers rejected the proposal with indignation. "We are ready to fight," cried they; "but not to be butchered like victims." Neither reproaches nor entreaties could alter their determination; and they were even so exasperated against Laudohn, that they threatened to tear him in pieces. In order to avoid their fury, he was obliged to conceal himself for a short time among the baggage, till their first emotions of resentment had subsided. In this situation, unsupported by his Austrian allies, Soltikoff instantly ordered two regiments of his own troops to advance, with drums beating and colours flying. Like their predecessors they were cut to pieces; and were succeeded by two more, who underwent a similar fate. Scarcely a man remained alive; but, their
bodies

bodies soon formed a stupendous mound, completely filling the space through which alone the enemy could penetrate. Of the seventh and eighth regiments, which in turn occupied the same spot, so few escaped, that the gentleman who related these particulars, assured me, an officer of the name of Richter, though only an ensign in the morning, commanded the survivors at the close of the day.

Such troops, though they might be put to the sword, it seemed impossible to vanquish. The Prussians, wearied with slaughter, and sinking under the heat of the weather, which was intolerable, began, after some hours, to relax in their ardour. Instead of resting satisfied with the important advantage which he had cheaply gained, and waiting for a more favourable occasion to complete the destruction of his enemies; Frederic, in opposition to all advice, forced his soldiers to new exertions. Laudohn perceiving their exhausted condition,

dition, and instantly availing himself of it, made a desperate charge at the head of the Austrian cavalry, which decided the fortune of the day. The Prussians fled on every side, threw down their arms, and abandoned the field. Tents, artillery, baggage, every thing fell into the hands of the conqueror. Scarcely could ten men be collected together in a body. Frederic, obliged to consult his safety by flight, passed the night in a hut, only a few miles from the scene of his defeat, destitute of protection, and almost without necessaries. Laudohn, after expressing to the Russian General his admiration of the valour and steadiness of his troops, offered, if Soltikoff would entrust a few of them to his command, to go in pursuit of the beaten enemy. He even ventured to answer for bringing his Prussian Majesty prisoner into the camp within three days. Far from accepting the offer, Soltikoff coldly declined it. "I have already gained two battles," said he,

he, "in little more than a fortnight; let
" my brother Daun now do something in
" the common cause."

Instead of being overwhelmed by such a disaster, as might have been expected, Frederic soon revived more formidable from his defeat. The inaction of the Russians allowed him time to assemble a new army; and Soltikoff neither followed up his victory, nor atchieved any thing of consequence during the rest of the campaign. But Dresden, which the Prussians had hitherto held, was wrested from them by Daun; and as if something sinister presided in the councils of their Sovereign, he underwent soon afterwards a humiliation still more poignant than the calamity of Cunerford: I mean the surrender of near twenty thousand troops at Maxen; an event which may almost be compared with the disgrace of the Caudine Forks, so memorable in the history of Rome. Ever disposed from his turn of mind and character, to act offensively, the King ventured to detach a body of forces, in order to cut off Daun's communication

munication with Bohemia. They were commanded to take post at Maxen; a position capable of being defended against superior numbers, and from its situation admirably calculated to intercept the retreat of the Austrians. Finck, a General of experience and merit, was selected for this commission, in the execution of which, he did not, however, by any means answer the expectations of his master.

I have heard the conduct of Finck discussed by many Austrian officers who were present at his surrender; and they in general agree, that he not only took a bad position, but that he defended it still worse. By leaving the heights above his camp unoccupied, he committed an irreparable fault, which enabled Daun, after surrounding, ultimately to compel him to lay down his arms. Always slow, and frequently irresolute, Daun hesitated nevertheless, whether he should make the attempt; but the exhortations of Lacy prevailed over his indecision. Finck, invested on every side by the Austrians, found escape impossible; and

and Lacy, after having made himself master of the heights which commanded the Prussian camp, summoned their commander to surrender. He was not in want of provisions; and General Wunsch, as well as many other officers, indignant at the idea of submitting to an ignominious capitulation, proposed either to cut their passage through the enemy, or to perish to the last man sword in hand. Finck, though he rejected the proposal, yet did not surrender till he had vainly made every effort to liberate himself and his unfortunate army. While the articles were framing, Wunsch attempted to force his way at the head of two regiments of cavalry. But, on the menace of the Austrians to put the remaining troops to the sword, and at Finck's express command, he reluctantly returned to the camp. Seventeen thousand of Frederic's veteran soldiers piled up their arms. Lacy rode in among them, after having concluded the capitulation, and made regiment after regiment prisoners of war.

The King was more sensible to this disgraceful and unexpected blow, than he had been to all his preceding defeats. In the violence of his resentment, he refused to admit Finck to his presence, or even to hear his justification. That officer soon afterwards entered into the Danish service, and is since dead at Copenhagen. I ought however, to add, that many persons here at Berlin, who are well able to appreciate the conduct of Finck, declare that he was less culpable than unfortunate. They assert that he originally remonstrated against the measure of taking post at Maxen, and only did it in compliance with his master's peremptory orders. Thus terminated the campaign of 1759, rendered for ever memorable by the reverses of Cunerisdorf and of Maxen. Saxony was likewise wrested from Frederic, which had served as a barrier to his own dominions; while his enemies, elated by success, promised themselves to effect his entire destruction in the course of the ensuing year.

Neither

Neither Daun nor Soltikoff form the most conspicuous figures in 1760. On the contrary, they sink into comparative obscurity ; while Laudohn, who had so lately distinguished himself at Cunerſdorf, by the ſuperiority of his views, added to the deciſion and rapidity of his movements, continued to inflict the moſt ſevere and humiliating wounds on the Pruſſian Monarchy. Fouquet, another General of Frederic's, renewed in ſome meaſure at Landſhut, the capitulation of Finck at Maxen. He made indeed a more vigorous defence ; but, the termination was ſcarcely leſs diſhonorable, and equally calamitous. Of twenty-one thouſand men whom he commanded, not above fix thouſand eſcaped the ſword or a priſon ; and Fouquet himſelf was among the number of the captives. Two ſuch diſaſters following each other at ſo ſhort an interval, ſullied no leſs the luſtre of the Pruſſian arms, than they elevated the courage of their opponents. Glatz, one of the keys of Sileſia, for which Laudohn

and Fouquet had contended, fell to the former.

That province became once more the principal theatre of the military operations, where Frederic maintained a desperate and unequal conflict against superior forces. On every side he appeared to be precluded not only from assistance, but even from escape. The Austrian and Russian Generals having enclosed him, anticipated his fall or his surrender. They already meditated to surprise him in his camp, and to renew the affair at Hohkirchen. But, the genius of Frederic sustained, and his celerity extricated him in this emergency. Without allowing his enemies time to mature their measures, he marched to meet the danger; and selecting Laudohn as the most exposed from his situation, he attacked that General at Lignitz on the 15th of August. After a desperate resistance the King obtained a victory, so much the more gratifying, as it was gained over a man whose name and successes had depressed the Prussians. It has
been

been commonly asserted, that Lacy, who commanded a separate body of troops, might have advanced in time to Laudohn's relief; but, that from a spirit of rivalry or jealousy, he withheld his assistance. Nothing can however, I believe, be more unfounded as well as unjust than such an aspersions, which is best confuted by Lacy's life and character. Far from sustaining any diminution of fame, Laudohn rose more respectable from his defeat, and gloriously repaired the disaster of Lignitz before the close of the war.

Under ordinary circumstances, where the respective force was in any measure balanced, Frederic's late victory would have given him a decided superiority during the remainder of the campaign. But, so immense was the disparity of numbers, that no common exertions could even long protract his total ruin. Berlin itself was laid under contribution by the Russians: Laudohn still maintained himself in the midst of Silesia, while Daun and Lacy were masters of Saxony and Lusatia. It

was not enough for Frederic to have forced Soltikoff to have abandoned Brandenburg, and ultimately to evacuate the other parts of his dominions. Some great and decisive victory was necessary, in order to enable him to take up his winter-quarters in Saxony. Rendered desperate by his situation, and regardless of obstacles, Frederic resolved to attack the Austrians, who occupied a position along the Elbe, equally strong and advantageous. Such were the circumstances in which took place the memorable battle of Torgau, on the third of November.

In no action of the whole war, not even at Colin, did the King probably commit so much to fortune; since the consequences of defeat to him were incalculable. Animated by a sense of the necessity of conquering, he forgot every personal consideration, and exposed himself to the severest fire, while he rallied and led his cavalry again and again to the charge. But such were the impediments, natural and artificial, with which his infantry had to contend,

contend, that though they displayed the steadiest courage, they never could open and form in face of the Austrian batteries. Towards evening, notwithstanding the pertinacious efforts of the King to tear the victory from Daun, he not only maintained his ground, but had repulsed the Prussians. Eighteen thousand of their best troops were left on the field, and scarcely two thirds of that number had fallen on the other side. Frederic, unable to renew the contest, must have fallen back upon Brandenburg; and Daun had already dispatched a courier, to announce to the Empress Queen the intelligence of a decisive victory; when an unexpected and fortuitous event completely changed the fortune of the day.

Some Prussian Soldiers having accidentally discovered that the heights of Siplitz, which commanded the Austrian camp, were unguarded, carried the intelligence to their officer. After ascertaining the fact, he reported it to General Ziethen; who, equally astonished and delighted at the information, caused

caused several pieces of cannon to be immediately transported thither, and occupied the post with a detachment of troops. The darkness of the night favoured and facilitated his operations. At daybreak so tremendous a cannonade opened on the forces of Daun, that he was compelled to break up his camp, and to retire in the utmost confusion, harassed and pursued by the Prussians. A second courier was sent off to Vienna, to communicate to Maria Theresa the disastrous reverse which had taken place. Lacy alone of all the Imperial Generals retreated in admirable order at the head of the division which he commanded, along the left bank of the Elbe. In sight of the victorious army, on the same side of the river, he made good his retreat for several leagues. Then crossing the Elbe at the town of Meissen, he gained the opposite heights, and checked the further progress of the enemy. This manoeuvre may rank with the finest of the present age. But, all the advantages of victory remained to Frederic.

Frederic. Laudohn, reluctantly compelled to quit Silesia, once more abandoned that Dutchy; while the Prussians, favoured by their late success, took up their winter-quarters again in Saxony.

The campaign of 1761, unlike all the preceding, is sterile in great events, no general action having been fought anywhere from its commencement to its close. Enfeebled by their past exertions, and rendered mutually cautious by the reverses of fortune which they had in turn experienced, neither party seemed inclined to risk an engagement. But, it was apparent that the King must ultimately sink under such an unequal struggle, which neither subsidies, nor ability, however consummate, nor military skill could long protract. At no period of the war does he, indeed, justly excite so much admiration. Five campaigns had deprived him of his most able Generals, and left him little other resource than in the unshaken firmness of his own character. A meaner Prince must have inevitably fallen under the weight of his
enemies

enemies and his embarrassments. Frederic, by judiciously protracting the final issue, effected his extrication. Instead of acting offensively and committing all to hazard, as he had done more than once in the preceding campaigns; he seems to have exchanged qualities with his antagonist, and to have adopted the phlegm as well as the caution of Daun. This versatility, which is not the least wonderful feature of his character, proved the preservation of Silesia, and of the Prussian Monarchy. Both must have been lost by a false step, or by an act of imprudence.

On the other hand, the Court of Vienna and the commanders of the Austrian forces, by not adopting the most vigorous measures, were guilty of an unpardonable error. They could not be ignorant that their ally the Empress of Russia was in a very precarious state of health; and they knew that her death would at least dissolve the union between the two Crowns, if not convert the Russians into open enemies. Under such circumstances, it seems obvious that Daun should

should have forced the King to an action, let the obstacles have been ever so great, since a single victory over him would have ended the contest. But, though Maria Theresa's forces were joined by the Russians not far from Breslaw; so ably did Frederic chuse his position, that Daun never ventured to attack him in his camp near Schweidnitz. While his brother Henry, with inferior forces defended Saxony and Brandenburg; the King baffled all the efforts of Daun, and finally compelled his Muscovite allies to retire into Poland, without effecting any material object. If Laudohn had not partly supplied Daun's inactivity, the campaign of 1761 would present a blank, destitute of events: but, neither Frederic's activity nor his vigilance, however unremitted, could prevent that able General from at once forming and executing an enterprize, in which we are at a loss whether to admire most his audacity, his rapidity, or his success. Schweidnitz, the most important fortress in all Silesia, defended by a numerous garrison, and com-
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manded by a general officer of approved capacity fell into the hands of the Austrians. Laudohn having unexpectedly marched with the velocity of lightning to attack it on the first of October, instantly planted his ladders against the walls; and despising the ordinary forms of a siege, carried it by storm, at the point of the bayonet, in three hours.

So unexpected a disaster seemed to preface the approaching fall of the King himself, which every thing announced to be imminent and almost inevitable. Charles the Twelfth's situation after his defeat at Pultowa, was hardly more desperate than that of Frederic, towards the close of 1761. Another campaign, according to all appearances, must have laid him entirely at the mercy of the vast combination which had determined his destruction. Maria Theresa, mistress of Schweidnitz and of Glatz, already anticipated the restoration of all Silesia; while the various Princes and States, whom Frederic had either injured or attacked, impatiently waited for the accomplishment of their

their respective expectations, in the division of his dominions. Such was the critical and hopeless condition of his affairs, when the death of Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, took place.

That Princess, Frederic's implacable enemy, expired at Petersburgh, of a distemper accelerated by her intemperance, on the fifth of January 1762. Her nephew and successor, Peter the Third, who had secretly laboured during several years to impede the progress of the Russian armies, instantly manifested without disguise, the violent predilection that he had long nourished for his Prussian Majesty; a partiality which rose to adoration. Not content with separating his forces from those of Maria Theresa, he acted as her avowed enemy, and as the auxiliary of Frederic: his reign was indeed short, and its termination tragical. But, the great principle of political connection between Muscovy and Austria, which had subsisted under Elizabeth, was not the less dissolved. Catharine the Second, though she by no means adopted the
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intemperate zeal of her husband in favour of Prussia, was too wise as well as too magnanimous, to resume the personal animosities of Elizabeth. She withdrew her troops altogether from the contest, almost as soon as she ascended the throne. Sweden, wearied with a war in which she had lost her military reputation, without reaping the smallest augmentation of territory, had previously concluded a separate peace with the Court of Berlin.

Liberated from two of his numerous opponents, the King in 1762 became superior to Daun in the field; more however, as it would seem, by his own energy and the characteristic caution of the Imperial General, than from any other circumstance. In face of the Austrian army, Frederic even ventured to lay regular siege to Schweidnitz; which, after a long and gallant defence, protracted to the last extremity, surrendered, notwithstanding every effort made for its preservation. With the battle of Freyberg, terminated the Seventh and last campaign of this long and sanguinary war; an

an action in which neither the King, nor Daun, nor Laudohn, had any share. The honour of the day was exclusively reserved for Prince Henry of Prussia, to whom his brother constantly intrusted the arduous task of repelling the enemy on the Saxon frontier. Having attacked the combined forces of Austria and the Empire, on the 29th of October, he obtained a brilliant victory. Frederic, who, justly alarmed for his safety, was in full march to his assistance, did not arrive till the day after the engagement. Those who see his character through an unfavorable medium, assert that he has never forgiven Prince Henry for having so gloriously closed the war, without waiting to allow a participator in his success.

The Prussian troops, elevated by their advantages, once more re-entered Bohemia, from which they had been so long expelled; while detached parties ravaged the circle of Franconia, ransomed the city of Nuremberg, and spread consternation over every part of the German empire. In this situa-

tion, Maria Theresa, abandoned by Russia and by Sweden, deriving little or no assistance from France, and unable to protect her own dominions, was necessitated to have recourse to negotiation. After seven campaigns, and after sustaining the rudest shocks of adverse fortune, Frederic was still not only capable of resistance, but in a state to act every where offensively. Of all their conquests, Glatz alone, together with a portion of the Dutchy of Cleves, remained in possession of the Austrians. Their sacrifice was requisite, in order to induce the enemy to evacuate Saxony, which unfortunate country had severely suffered for the political connections of its Sovereign, and his steady adherence to the House of Austria. These considerations imperiously dictated the peace of Hubertsburg, which restored tranquillity to the empire in the beginning of 1763. Silesia, the principal object of contest, remained entire to the Prussian monarchy; and scarcely a foot of territory was lost or gained by a war, which had not only caused so vast an effusion of blood, but

but which threatened more than once the subversion of the present political system of Europe.

When we consider the long resistance made by a Prince so inferior in political strength to his antagonists; when we appreciate his military efforts, and compare them with his apparent resources, we cannot refuse to him our highest admiration. He is not merely great when crowned with success. His reverses and defeats, his errors and misfortunes, contribute to elevate him in our opinion. We follow him with eagerness through all the transitions of war; and we see him with exultation emerge again into daylight from his complicated distress. His fortitude, under circumstances of almost unparalleled depression, excites astonishment blended with respect. Charles the Twelfth was only a successful madman, destitute of system, impelled by blind animosity, and incapable of repairing his faults. After elevating his country to a transitory point of greatness in the scale of Europe, he precipitated the Swedes into lasting poverty and oblivion.

oblivion. But Frederic knows how to preserve, as well as how to conquer. During a war of such duration, marked in many of its stages by unprecedented calamities, he neither impoverished, nor even greatly depopulated his dominions. They are now admitted to be more flourishing and better cultivated, than at any period since his accession. It is true that his policy is not always the most upright, beneficent, or consonant to the dictates of humanity. And however necessity, which has been justly termed the plea of tyrants, may sometimes seem to acquit him; it is an acquittal with which Princes such as Trajan would not be satisfied.

His treatment of the Saxons during the late war, scarcely admits of any justification, and will, I trust, have no imitators. I do not merely allude to the fact of his immuring the principal inhabitants of Dresden in a public building, where they were detained till they had raised a heavy contribution, and afterwards drawn bills on their correspondents in various parts of Europe. Nor do

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I consider his causing the suburbs of that beautiful city to be destroyed, in order to secure it against the approach of the Austrians; as meriting any severe condemnation. These acts, however harsh, may be in a great measure justified by military necessity. But, there are others imputable to Frederic, over which no casuistry can throw a gloss. Neither the laws of nations, nor those of modern war, allow of transporting the male and female manufacturers of a conquered state, into the dominions of the invader. This infraction of natural justice was nevertheless committed at Meissen in Saxony; a place famous for the fabric of porcelain, so generally admired under the name of Dresden China. All the best artists, forcibly sent to Berlin, were there compelled, during life, to continue their labours, and exert their talents, for the profit of a Sovereign, the inveterate enemy of their country. They, and their descendants or their scholars, who are still here, have become the involuntary denizens of another soil, the subjects of Frederic the Second.

Hundreds of Saxon young women, carried off by violence from their paternal cottages, were sent into the remotest provinces of the Prussian Monarchy, and there matched with husbands provided for them by the State. The rape of the Sabines in antiquity, seems to be the best precedent for such treatment. In compliance with the same system of policy, numbers of the Saxon youth, either taken in arms, or dragged from the domestic occupations of husbandry, were obliged to enter into the Prussian service, and to carry destruction into the bosom of their native country. The Romans, it is true, in the decline of the empire, incorporated into their legions the Barbarian youth of the Rhine and the Danube. But, they never forced the Parthians, or the Huns taken in battle, to bear arms against their Sovereign, instead of fighting for his cause. Such an experiment might even be accounted dangerous under a variety of aspects; but, Frederic possesses the secret of directing and regulating a machine, which in common hands would probably

probably be fatal to its inventor. His army, unlike the military force of other Princes, is composed in peace as well as in war, of discordant and heterogeneous materials. Every European State, from Spain to Russia, may be said to contribute towards its formation. Poland, Germany, Holland, Denmark, but above all, France, furnish him with recruits. The French alone may be always estimated at five-and-twenty thousand men.

Neither that sentiment which we denominate the love of our country, nor the principle of loyalty to the Sovereign, constitute here the general basis of military discipline and adherence. Frederic contents himself with substituting in their place other motives of action, less voluntary and less honourable, but equally efficacious. How, in fact, can the native of Gascony, of Podolia, or of Suabia, entrapped or seduced into a foreign service, and detained in it by force, be animated with patriotism, affection, or even a sense of allegiance? It is enough if he does not detest the Prince and the State for whom he draws

the trigger, or pushes the bayonet. Aware of this original defect in the constitution of his force, the King has recourse to other modes of maintaining and recruiting his army. Never, perhaps, did human ability, invested with unlimited power, exert so much ingenuity in detaining its captives; for, in that light, the far greater part of the foreign troops must be considered. This city, as well as Potzdam, is destitute of fortifications; but both are surrounded with a strong wall, or stoccade, one of the principal objects of which is to prevent desertion. With a view to increase the difficulties, all the sentinels on guard are commonly placed either two together, or at so small a distance from each other, as to render it impracticable to desert without being perceived. The line of sentinels being double, one without the other; and the soldiers being called over every two hours; it seems nearly impossible to get, undiscovered, to any considerable distance. If, however, by good fortune or speed, they should effect it, guns are instantly

instantly fired, to spread the alarm throughout the country. The peasants, on hearing the signal, are obliged to rise, in order to secure the unfortunate fugitive; and they are even personally interested in his recapture, as they must furnish a substitute in the place of any one who escapes. Yet, in defiance of these, and similar precautions, such are the attractions of freedom, and the impatience of bondage, that every night attempts are made to desert. The frontiers of Saxony are so near, that they may be reached from Potzdam in the space of three or four hours.

The prodigious proportion of foreigners in the service of Frederic, renders it matter of calculation at the commencement of a war, whether one or two campaigns may not be principally supported at their expence, with a comparatively slender sacrifice of native Prussians. By thus sparing the blood of his own subjects, and reserving them for subsequent emergencies, the King is enabled to sustain the first shock of

of hostilities, without materially affecting the internal industry, cultivation, or population of his dominions. It is nevertheless a dangerous weapon, which may recoil, unless superintended with equal vigilance and dexterity. The bayonet is admitted to be more formidable than the musket: but, if it is to be feared, that the soldier wants adherence to the Prince for whom he fights, its very advantages become matter of apprehension. Whole platoons, when once mingled with the enemy, may throw down their arms: a circumstance wholly impossible to take place, while the fire is kept up at a distance between two bodies of troops. This is a delicate point on which to explain myself; but, it is well understood here, by every man acquainted with the formation of the Prussian army.

The Jews, who ever since the time of Adrian, have manifested the most decided inaptitude and antipathy to war, have nevertheless attracted the attention of Frederic, as capable of being made subservient
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to the general protection or defence. After the partition of Poland, five years ago, finding that there was a very considerable number of them in the tract of territory which fell to his share, he determined to embody them, and to teach them the science of arms. They vainly remonstrated that war was neither analogous to their genius, nor agreeable to their feelings. A corps of several thousand was formed, compelled to learn the manual exercise, and passed in review. But, such was found to be on trial, their insurmountable disinclination to bear arms, that after many vain endeavours, they were finally broken and disbanded. The abhorrence of the peasants towards them being so violent, that it was apprehended the Jews might be massacred or pillaged, in passing through the villages, to their respective homes; an escort of horse was therefore ordered to conduct them in safety back to their abodes. I believe it is the only attempt of the kind, which has been yet made in our times,

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to bring Jews into the field; and having failed in such able hands, we may conjecture that it will not be speedily repeated by other Princes.

No Sovereign, antient or modern, has ever better known how to awaken and to animate in his cause, the vanity as well as the pride of the soldier. In all his writings, in all his addresses to them, he calls them by the endearing epithets of "Mes cavaliers, mes enfans, mes camarades." These appellations, though they mean nothing in effect, yet produce a powerful sensation, and tend to make some amends for the want of more solid benefits or remunerations. There is, in fact, I believe, no establishment in the Prussian dominions, precisely resembling those of Chelsea, or of Greenwich among us, to which the invalided or the wounded soldier may retire, after having passed his life in the active service of the State. The veteran must depend, in a great measure, on the King's ability, inclination, and opportunity of providing for him,

him, when he can no longer carry arms. His revenues, perhaps, are not sufficiently ample to enable him to furnish adequate funds for age and infirmity, in every instance. Detraction has accused him of not wishing to maintain any troops, except such as are capable of appearing in the field : but, I believe the insinuation to be no less malignant, than void of foundation. Frederic understands too well his real interest, ever to treat with cruelty the supporters of his greatness, the instruments and companions of his victories.

Fifteen years have nearly elapsed since the conclusion of the peace of Hubertsburg ; and it is matter of curious speculation, whether in case of a rupture the Prussian troops will maintain the ascendancy over those of Austria, which, all circumstances considered, they had incontestably acquired, during the last war. This is however, a question not likely to be speedily resolved, as appearances seem to indicate a long continuance of the calm enjoyed

joyed by Germany. Silesia, to the resumption of which the Court of Vienna formerly looked with ceaseless anxiety, is now confirmed to Prussia by time and long prescription. The King, who begins to feel the pressure of age, must wish rather to secure than to augment the grandeur of his house. Content with having erected so vast a fabric, his ambition will probably be satisfied with devolving it entire to his successor.

LETTER. VI.

Review of the Prussian History, previous to the Accession of Frederic the Second.—His Marriage.—Queen of Prussia.—Character and Death of William Augustus, the late Prince Royal.—His Disposition and Qualities.—Severity exercised towards him by the King.—Princess Royal.—Character, and Expectations formed of Frederic William.—Prince Henry of Prussia.—His Talents and Services.—Princess Amelia.—Prince Ferdinand of Prussia.

BERLIN, November 2d, 1777.

EIGHTY years have not yet elapsed since the period when this powerful Monarchy, which now occupies so distinguished a rank among the States of Europe, was only a German Electorate, whose Sovereign was Duke of Prussia. It would however be unjust to attribute to the talents or even to the victories of the present King exclusively, so extraordinary and rapid an aggrandizement. The Prussian greatness is the work of four successive

Princes,

Princes, who, in the space of near a hundred and forty years, availing themselves of a variety of circumstances, have elevated their house to its actual state. Frederic William, commonly denominated in history, “the Great Elector,” laid the foundations by his wisdom, valor, and policy. In the course of near half a century, his able administration repaired the calamities of the preceding reign; emancipated the Dukedom of Prussia from its feudal homage to the Crown and Republic of Poland; introduced arts, manufactures, and civilization among his subjects; and rendered the Electors of Brandenburg the most powerful Princes of the North, under the rank of crowned heads. When I consider these facts, I am not surprized at the eulogiums conferred on him by his present Majesty, in his writings; nor at the popular veneration with which his name and actions are always mentioned in this country.

The vanity of the son continued and embellished the fabrick, raised by the talents of the father. Ostentation, rather

than a wise and enlarged ambition, probably stimulated Frederic the First to exchange the electoral bonnet for a crown: but, it may be justly doubted, whether the deepest and most successful policy could have contributed so much to the elevation of his family. Whatever contempt has been thrown on his character by the present King his grandson, he has always appeared to me to have justly challenged the gratitude of his posterity. His personal deformity, his love of expensive shew, and his puerile attachment to favourites, are all exposed with severity, in the "Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg." If, however, we consult other sources of information, we shall see him depicted as magnificent, liberal, and humane. It is thus that Pollnitz has described him; and it is in these colors that I have heard him mentioned by persons here, whose fathers occupied distinguished places in his Court.

To Frederic the First succeeded his son, Frederic William, the most harsh and un-

amiable of Princes, whose principal felicity seemed to consist in forming and disciplining a giant regiment of guards, the wonder of his own people, and the ridicule of foreign nations. Parsimonious in every other article of pleasure, and an enemy to expence, he retained about him no trace of his father's splendor. Terrible in his anger, inflexible in his prejudices, and inexorable in his resentment, he punished the transgressions of his children with unexampled severity. His successor, the present King, narrowly escaped the fate of Don Carlos in Spain, and of the Czarowitz Alexis in Russia, for a fault which merited only reprehension. To the interposition of the late Emperor Charles the Sixth, whose daughter he since despoiled of Silesia, Frederic was eminently indebted for his pardon and his life. It must be confessed that over this transaction, as well as over many other censurable parts of Frederic William's conduct, he has thrown the veil of filial piety and decorum, in all his writings; while he avows the obligations

obligations due to his father's economy, his policy, and his attention to promote the prosperity of his subjects.

The private felicity of his son did not form equally an object of his endeavours, since no sooner had he released the Prince Royal from a long and rigorous confinement in the Citadel of Custrin, than he was compelled by his father to contract a marriage altogether contrary to his inclinations. Frederic William's choice having fallen on the Princess Elizabeth Christina of Brunswic Wolfenbottle, the nuptials were solemnized in June 1733; but his parental authority never could enforce their consummation. She remains, it is supposed, a maiden Queen. At the time of her union with his present Majesty, she nevertheless possessed personal charms of the most captivating kind, which might well have awakened desire, if not excited attachment. She had not completed her eighteenth year, and to a very fine complexion, she added a graceful and elegant figure. But, these attractions had no influence over

her husband, who manifested for her an insurmountable indifference, which he was at little pains to conceal. His disinclination towards the Princess, was augmented by his contempt of her understanding. As the match had been on his part altogether involuntary, doubts of its validity might have been started not without some reason. It was even commonly supposed that on Frederic William's death, and his own accession to the throne, he would avail himself of the pretext of compulsion; either by disowning her as his legal wife, or by procuring a divorce.

Frederic has not however, manifested the slightest disposition to break the matrimonial fetters imposed on him by the late King, nor shewn any anxiety to transmit the Crown to a lineal successor. Whether a sense of honor, respect to the memory of his predecessor, or other motives of a personal nature, difficult and delicate to explain, may have contributed most to produce his acquiescence, it is not easy to say with certainty. One of his first acts, was

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to acknowledge her publicly as Queen of Prussia; but, satisfied with that recognition, he went no further. During four-and-forty years which have since elapsed, he has uniformly treated her with external respect, civility, and coldness. In the beginning of his reign, when they frequently appeared together on public occasions, the Queen, naturally timid, felt so much overawed by the consciousness of her own inferiority of understanding, added to her husband's neglect; that if by accident he addressed his discourse to her at table, she burst into tears, and was incapable of reply. This conduct, far from exciting any emotion of concern or compassion in his bosom, only augmented his dislike: a sentiment which derived strength from the comparison between her and the two Queens her immediate predecessors, who were both very superior women. Sophia Charlotte, wife of Frederic the First, the friend and correspondent of Leibnitz, cultivated letters and philosophy as the best companions of

the throne, and the greatest consolations of human life. The late Queen enjoyed to the time of her death, when she was more than seventy, the affectionate attachment of her family and her subjects. Both were Princesses of Hanover; one the sister, and the other the daughter of George the First, King of England. Frederic has immortalized the memory of the first Queen of Prussia, in his writings; and he found leisure even in the midst of his greatest public difficulties, to pay the tribute of filial affection to the virtues of the second. She died only ten days after the memorable defeat at Colin, in June 1757, leaving her son and the Prussian Monarchy itself in the most perilous crisis.

The present Queen is little known beyond the limits of Berlin, or the palace of Charlottenburg, to which she commonly repairs in summer. She has indeed the name and honors of royalty; but, her life is melancholy, uniform, and insipid. Nor are her appointments adequate to sustaining the representation of a Sovereign, in a manner

manner becoming her dignity. However limited her talents, she merits from her amiable qualities and virtues, the attachment which is universally paid to her. Age and knowledge of the world have insensibly corrected her natural timidity; but, with her husband she has scarcely any except a nominal connection. Equally a stranger to his pains and to his pleasures, she sees him only in his occasional visits to the capital, in common with every other person about the Court.

It is no less true than incredible, that in the course of near half a century, which has elapsed since her arrival here, she never has been either at Potsdam or at "Sans Souci." The mortification of such an exclusion is augmented by the preference shewn to all the other Princesses of the Royal Family, who have been repeatedly there, at the King's invitation. It is true, that some years ago, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswic her brother being arrived at Berlin, his Majesty acquainted

him by letter, that if he had a wish to visit Potzdam and "Sans Souci," orders were given to shew him every thing deserving his attention. Frederic, who was just setting out for Silesia, added, that "the Queen, if she pleased, might accompany him." But, warmly as she desired to gratify her curiosity, by the sight of a place so interesting, she disdained to accept the permission. "If," said she, "his Majesty does not deign to invite me to his palace, when he is there in person, I will not profit of his absence to visit it." In consequence of her adherence to this determination, her brother went there alone.

The late King Frederic William was carried off by a dropsy, while still in the vigor of his age, leaving behind him a numerous family. His second son, William Augustus is no more ; but, it is in his line that the crown will probably be perpetuated. He was the handsomest Prince of the Royal House, of agreeable manners,

manners, and of an amiable character; though in talents civil as well as military, and in strength of mind, he could neither be compared with the King, nor with his younger brother Henry. His father selected for him another Princess of the family of Brunswic, Louisa Amelia, sister to the Queen of Prussia; but, he was not distinguished either by his continence before, or by his fidelity to the nuptial bed, after marriage. Unlike Frederic, he manifested a decided passion for the pleasures of love; and his gallantries with women of distinction, were no less public than they were numerous. Cut off by a premature death, in the midst of the great war that seemed to menace the destruction of the Prussian Monarchy, the event of which he is said to have deprecated; he had not the satisfaction to witness the triumphant manner in which it was terminated. He expired in disgrace, at the age of thirty-six, scarcely more than nineteen years ago; and his end is justly supposed to have been accelerated, if not occasioned

occasioned by the poignancy of his own feelings, to which he fell a sacrifice.

After the memorable defeat which his Prussian Majesty sustained at Colin, in June 1757, he was obliged to retire with precipitation towards the confines of Saxony. In this critical situation, having hastily raised the siege of Prague, he thought proper to divide his forces; entrusting to his brother William Augustus a considerable corps, which was posted in one of the northern circles of Bohemia. Frederic, whose maxim has always been, that an army acting on the defensive in an enemy's country, melts away by desertion and by sickness, more rapidly than by the sword; enjoined his brother to spare no efforts, in order to impede the progress of the Austrians, who were advancing rapidly into Lusatia. In his instructions he added, that it would be better at all events to lose his soldiers in attacking and harassing Daun, than to suffer them to moulder away in retreating before a victorious

torious General. Whether from want of military skill, or as other persons here assert, from inferiority in numbers, and in the quality of the troops under his command; it is certain that the Prince did not execute the commission given him, in a satisfactory manner. Daun having passed him, entered Lusatia, and bombarded the town of Zittau. The King instantly dismissed William Augustus from his service; would listen to no explanations; and when they met, he turned away his horse's head from the unfortunate object of his resentment. On the Prince's attempting to excuse and to justify his conduct, "Si je vous traitois comme vous meritez," answered Frederic, "je vous ferois decapiter; et j'enverrois votre tête à tous les Généraux de mon armée." He was immediately ordered to retire; and he died in June 1758, about a year afterwards, of the most incurable of all maladies, a broken heart, in the prime of life. The King, engaged at that time in
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the arduous enterprize of Olmutz, which demanded all his attention, had scarcely leisure, or perhaps disposition, to regret him. He left one son, named Frederic William, who is heir to the Prussian Monarchy; besides a daughter, the present Princess of Orange. His widow still survives, and resides at Berlin; but, she is as little distinguished by Frederic's notice, as her sister the Queen. They pass their lives in obscurity, and neither the one nor the other will ever occupy a conspicuous place in the annals of the house of Brandenburg. Those who, from whatever motive, desirous of change, eagerly anticipate a new reign; and many of that description are to be found here; contemplate with pleasure the character as well as qualities of the Prince Royal of Prussia. He is just thirty-three years of age, full six feet in height, and of a vigorous frame: in his early youth he was of a thin habit, but he now inclines to corpulency. His countenance, open, gracious, and engaging, indicates more benefi-

beneficence of heart, than it expresses superiority of mind. His figure, far exceeding the proportions of ordinary men, may be termed athletic, and almost Herculean. If he were habited in the skin of the Nemæan Lion, he would convey no inadequate idea of the son of Jupiter and Alcmena. Formed for a camp, more than a drawing-room, he has the frank and martial air of a soldier, rather than the polished manners of a Prince. Of a robust constitution, and inured to hardships, he has been, from his childhood, little accustomed to the luxury, which frequently in other countries surrounds persons of royal birth. Bred in the school of Potzdam, under the severe and continual inspection of the King his uncle, he has practised the most implicit obedience. Early taught to defend the Crown, which is one day to descend to him, he has passed through all the subordinate military ranks, up to that of Major-General in the Prussian service, which he now holds. The discipline to which every other officer

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is subjected, suffers no relaxation for the Heir Apparent. He dares not absent himself from his duty, or be remiss in its discharge, without incurring the highest resentment of his Sovereign, displayed in the most public manner. Every morning, in winter, no less than in summer, he is to be found on the parade, before the palace at Potzdam; nor can he even leave that place, except by stealth, to visit Berlin, unless by express permission from the King. Few Princes, who are probably destined to reign, have been treated in their youth with so much rigour.

If the heir to the Crown is by no means endowed with the abilities of Frederic, or of Prince Henry, his two uncles; he is, on the other hand, admitted to possess a solid and enlarged understanding. His mental qualities are certainly neither brilliant nor imposing; but, they are far from being inadequate to the arduous situation which he is by and by to occupy. In the King he has had constantly before his
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eyes the greatest model of successful ambition which any age can produce. His mind has been improved, if not by the study of polite letters, at least by an acquaintance with tactics and the science of war; nor is he deficient in more liberal branches of knowledge and information. He possesses the inestimable advantage of having been initiated from his cradle, into the system of the Prussian administration, finances, and policy. Having already attained to a ripe age, it is less probable that he will be led into excesses of pleasure or profusion, whenever he shall ascend the throne. The fabrick of the Prussian greatness has been constructed by a master-hand, which has long preserved it; nor are the same talents requisite for maintaining, as for erecting the edifice. The present King alone, perhaps, could have conquered and retained Silesia, or have acquired Polish Prussia: but, a much inferior Prince in energy or vigilance, may be able to keep possession of them,

them, when transmitted to him in peaceful succession.

Unfortunately the Heir Apparent has never been acceptable to, nor beloved by the King his uncle, who has always conceived and expressed a mean opinion of his nephew's abilities. Though he resides constantly at Potzdam, he is scarcely ever at "Sans Souci;" and is rarely admitted to the royal table, unless when he accompanies his Majesty to Breslaw, or into other parts of his dominions. He has never been distinguished by that preference, esteem, and partiality, which Frederic manifests for his nephews of the family of Brunswic; in particular for the Hereditary Prince, and his brother Prince Frederic, who have each apartments in "Sans Souci." It is impossible not to disapprove a conduct, which is at once impolitic, unjust, and severe. The coldness and neglect with which the Prince Royal is treated, must naturally tend rather to depress and to irritate, than to
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exalt or ennoble his mind. It may even have injurious public effects at some future period, and may lay the foundation of great national misfortunes. We must, on the other hand, admit that history furnishes no models of Princes so truly great, as those who have been educated in constraint or in adversity. It was the school of Elizabeth, of Henry the Fourth, and of Frederic himself.

In one instance the present King has manifested far more liberality of mind and indulgence towards his nephew, than he experienced himself from his own father. The Prince of Prussia has been twice married; but, neither in his first nor second choice, does his uncle appear to have exerted any undue or tyrannical influence. Perhaps the severity with which he was treated in that important transaction of his own life, may have induced him to leave his nephew more at liberty. He was married in July 1765, to Elizabeth, Princess of Brunswic Wolfenbuttle, from whom he

was divorced about three years afterwards. Motives of state rendering it necessary for him to contract another alliance, as he had no male issue by his first wife, he remained for some time undecided in his preference. The German Empire with its numerous Princesses offered a variety of candidates, who were successively named as likely to fill the vacant place in the Royal Family. I am assured that he manifested an inclination for the present Landgravine of Hesse Cassel, daughter of the Margrave of Brandenburg Schwedt, one of the most beautiful women in Germany. She is said, however, to have refused or declined the honour intended her. It is certain that he might have received the hand of his cousin Sophia Albertina, sister of the present King of Sweden ; but, from motives which I do not pretend to guess, he was averse to the match. At length the Princess Frederica Louisa of Hesse Darmstadt was selected, and the nuptials were celebrated in July 1769. She is an amiable, virtuous, and pleasing

pleasing woman, possessing indeed neither the personal attractions, nor the graces of her predecessor, Elizabeth of Brunswic; but exempt from her errors and defects. She is of a middle size, her countenance agreeable though not handsome, her manners easy and engaging, her character estimable, and formed to excite universal respect.

Notwithstanding these claims to attention, she does not enjoy the good fortune of being acceptable to the King, who has more than once mortified her in a public manner; and who shews her none of the flattering marks of preference and distinction, with which he was accustomed to honour the first Princess of Prussia. She resides constantly at Potzdam, rarely permitted to revisit Berlin, and in a sort of melancholy retirement. Her attendants are few, her establishment scanty, and destitute of splendor. Those who have constant access to her, assure me, that though not distinguished by extraordinary endow-

ments of mind, her understanding is solid, and her conversation highly pleasing. She has already fulfilled the great object of her marriage, by giving two heirs to the monarchy; her eldest son Frederic William, having been born in August 1770. If she has not captivated the affections, or secured the constancy of her husband, she possesses at least his esteem, and receives from him every proof of respect.

Like his father William Augustus, he does not pique himself on observing his nuptial fidelity, or even on concealing his irregularities. Frederic, severe on the parade, but, extremely relaxed on every point of moral or conjugal duty, sees with indifference the Prince's infidelity to the marriage bed. His present favourite is Mademoiselle Enkel, whom he acknowledges as his mistress, and by whom he has several children. I have seen her frequently, as she has her box at the French Comedy. Like Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barrè, who successively governed

governed France, her origin is not illustrious; but Nature has been lavish to her in charms. They are, however, by no means sufficiently powerful to retain the exclusive possession of her lover. The Prince frequently comes to Berlin to visit her incognito, without the King his uncle's knowledge; as she dares not, on any consideration, be seen at Potsdam. When on these secret expeditions, he always returns either during the night, or early on the ensuing morning.

The real character of the Prince of Prussia is probably as yet much concealed, and time alone can unfold it to the world. The superior genius of the King, the estrangement which subsists between them, and the degree of tyranny which is exercised by Frederic over his nephew, compel him to remain in the shade. Whenever he ascends the throne, Europe, as well as his subjects, will perhaps be astonished at the display of talents and qualities, which at present he

is not suspected to possess. Many leading points of his disposition and temper are, however, already well ascertained. In his manners, he is affable, communicative, and pleasant: in society, convivial, cheerful, and agreeable, without unbecoming familiarity. He is liberal to the greatest degree; and he has manifested a warmth of adherence or attachment towards all who have suffered for his sake, which does honor to the goodness of his heart. Various persons, whom he has been supposed to distinguish by his notice or friendship, have on that account incurred the royal displeasure, and have even been sent into distant parts of the Prussian dominions. The Prince, from his narrow appointments, extends to them pecuniary relief. Nothing is more unquestionable than his personal courage, and he is neither deficient in ambition, nor in love of glory. Those who know him best, have assured me that he will tread in the steps of his predecessor; and will have
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no object nearer his heart, than to maintain and to augment the splendor of the Prussian Monarchy. They assert, that he will renounce pleasure and dissipation, for the cares of state, and the duties of a sovereign; but, futurity alone can prove the truth or the fallacy of these premature predictions.

It is certain, that notwithstanding the glory of the present Monarch, and the natural effect of so distinguished a character, in exciting the national vanity of his subjects; yet, no inconsiderable part of them look forward, with anxiety and impatience, to the period of his life. Independently of the love of novelty and change inherent in the nature of man, the Prussians have reasons peculiar to themselves for desiring a new master. Frederic, declining in years and in health, severe, economical, vigilant, and difficult to deceive, may excite respect, but awakens no sentiment of affection. Averse to pleasure, gallantry, or expence, he is neither furrounded by courtiers, nor accessible to flattery. The Prince, on the contrary,

trary, from natural disposition, is susceptible, amorous, liberal, and fond of society. In him his subjects anticipate a more indulgent master; less elevated and imposing, but, one whom they may love as well as admire. The Court, if that appellation can with propriety be given to the solitary retirement of Potzdam and "Sans Souci," will probably be transferred, in a greater or lesser degree, to Berlin; and the metropolis, now deserted by the Sovereign, will then resume its gaiety. Such are the expectations formed of the Heir Apparent, and such the pleasing anticipations of future felicity under his reign!

It is natural that I should say a few words relative to Prince Henry of Prussia; a person scarcely less distinguished by his great endowments, than his elder brother the King. He is at this time near fifty-two years of age, plain in his person, and destitute of any external graces of figure. Naturally silent, cold, and distant in his manners, he can nevertheless, when occasion

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sion demands, shake off his habitual reserve, and become affable, communicative, and ingratiating. To superior abilities, he joins uncommon cultivation of mind ; and like Frederic, he is no less a general than a statesman. During the whole course of the late war, the King always committed to his charge the most arduous undertakings, in which consummate prudence or military skill were required. With inferior and ill-disciplined troops, he not only sustained, but repelled more than once, the Austrian and Saxon attacks. At the battle of Prague, he displayed the greatest intrepidity. At that of Freyberg, he manifested talents for war, which rank him among the first commanders of the age. To the superiority of his views and dispositions, was principally due the victory which he there obtained, and of which I have already spoken elsewhere. His military talents are said to be the reverse of the King's. Frederic, enterprizing in his temper, is formed for bold and offensive measures. Prince Henry,

Henry, more cautious, is calculated for defensive war.

It is not only in the field that his abilities have been actively and beneficially employed, for the support of the Prussian Crown and Monarchy : he has surmounted obstacles in the cabinet equally difficult. To him the King committed the two delicate negociations with Catharine the Second, which changed the face of Europe, eventually produced the partition of Poland, and cemented on lasting grounds, the friendship between the Courts of Peterburgh and Berlin. In the two visits which he made to the Empress for that purpose, when he acted at once as minister of state and as ambassador, he more than answered every expectation, and effected all the leading points intrusted to his care. Such an union of talents is almost unexampled in two Princes so nearly allied. There are not wanting persons here, who esteem him superior in capacity to the King ; but the elevation

elevation of a throne is more calculated for its display, than a private station.

In many particulars of their life and disposition, even in their very defects, the similarity between the two brothers is striking. Like Frederic, Prince Henry is destitute of male or female issue. Like him too, the Prince is not of an amorous complexion, nor happy in his domestic connexions. Both pass a great portion of their lives in retreat, little seen except by the persons who compose their household, and constitute their ordinary society. The Prince was married in 1752, to Wilhelmina, daughter of Maximilian, Landgrave of Hesse Cassel; but they neither eat, speak, meet, nor cohabit together. She is, nevertheless, not only an amiable and pleasing woman, but possessed of a superior understanding. It certainly is not in the Royal Family of Prussia, that examples of conjugal union or felicity can at present be easily found. Such is the alienation which subsists between Prince Henry and his wife,
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that he has always, when at Berlin, a separate table ; but, he resides during the far greater part of the year, at his palace of Rheinsberg, near the borders of the Dutchy of Mecklenberg Strelitz. It is there that he is to be seen and studied, not in the capital, where he rarely remains more than three months, from January till April. Though little consulted or employed by Frederic at present, no one doubts that if circumstances of danger or difficulty should arise, his abilities would again be called into active exertion.

Of the King's four sisters, only one, the Princess Amelia, youngest of Frederic William's numerous family, has remained unmarried. She occupies a splendid palace in one of the best streets of the metropolis ; and Frederic, who regards her with great affection, usually breakfasts with her whenever he occasionally visits Berlin. Having been elected Abbess of Quedlinbourg in 1751, the income arising from that ecclesiastical preferment enables her to maintain

an establishment suitable to her birth. Her endowments of mind are said to be extraordinary; but her health and constitution are altogether broken by disease, though she is scarcely fifty-four years of age. Such are her infirmities, that she has entirely lost an eye, and the use of one arm; in consequence of which she is seldom seen in public, and never appears at Court.

With Prince Ferdinand of Prussia, last of the Royal line, I shall conclude this letter. Although he may not have the same personal claims to immortality with his two elder brothers, in personal courage he may justly emulate them. During the late war he served in the Prussian forces, and he has the rank of General. It is not, however, to him that Frederic will probably ever intrust, in a moment of danger, the material interests of the family of Brandenburg. Prince Ferdinand has two sons by his present wife; so that, notwithstanding the sterility of the Queen and of the Princess Henry, the Crown, we may reason-

reasonably conjecture, will not want males to inherit it in our time. Those who believe that genius is transmitted by descent, will perhaps regret that neither the King nor Prince Henry are likely to leave behind them any posterity. But, however greatly their abilities may have conduced to elevate the Prussian Monarchy to its present state, we may securely confide its future preservation, to the valour, judgment, and probity of its collateral heirs.

LETTER VII.

Potzdarn.—“*Sans Souci.*”—*The new Palace.*—

Reflections on Potzdarn, and on the genius of the Prussian government.

LEIPSIK, November 9, 1777.

ON the fifth of this month I left Berlin, after a stay of about seven weeks, and arrived at Potzdarn the same evening. It is difficult to imagine a more sterile tract of country, than that which separates the two cities. The whole is an expanse of sand, exhibiting scarcely any marks of cultivation, thinly peopled, dreary, and resembling a wilderness, rather than the vicinity of a great metropolis. Groves of melancholy fir diversify, without enlivening the prospect; and few marks of agriculture or of opulence are seen. This appearance is, no doubt, to be chiefly attributed to the ungrateful nature of the soil; but something must,

must, in my judgment, be allowed for the genius of the government, which is more directed to political aggrandizement, than to the felicity of the people.

If Berlin is the capital of the Prussian Monarchy, Potzdam may be properly esteemed the ordinary residence of the Sovereign, since the death of Frederic the First, more than sixty years ago. The late King, his son, preferred it to the metropolis; and the present King passes there the far greater part of the year. Every square and every street display the characteristic marks of his genius. I consider it more in the light of a military station, or as the head-quarters of an army in cantonment, than as a city in the common acceptation of the term. Like Berlin, it is regular, modern, and constructed with symmetry. Some of the gates are of Athenian taste and elegance, exhibiting models of architecture in various forms. The Royal Palace is a princely edifice, in front of which extends the parade, where Frederic, unless prevented by

by indisposition, is every morning to be found, reviewing his guards. I saw him gallop along the line, and give the word of command in person, with all the fire and animation of a young man. Yet he is now more than sixty-five years of age; a period of life, long before which the great Condé, as well as Marlborough, ceased to appear in the field; and after which, scarcely any of the most illustrious Generals of the last or present century, have ventured to assume the command of armies. If Prince Eugene and Marshal Villars form exceptions to the remark, it must be admitted that they did not add to their laurels, by their concluding campaigns. The King of Prussia, notwithstanding his bodily infirmities, preserves the freshness, and even much of the activity of his youth. In case of a rupture with Austria or Russia, no man doubts that he would lead his troops in person against the enemy. He may perhaps be less enterprizing than formerly; but neither the energy nor vigor of his

faculties seem to have suffered any diminution.

Many causes, physical as well as moral, conduce to render Potzdam gloomy and cheerless. The position is in itself destitute of natural gaiety or beauty. A sandy, barren soil, on which only the fir loves to run up or to thrive, is an inherent and irremediable defect. It is even adverse to the genius of architecture: for so loose is the ground, that it appears to be incapable of long sustaining the incumbent weight of any very large or heavy structure: a deformity visible in various parts of the city, where the buildings have sunk at the foundation. Yet I do not recollect to have heard that at Palmyra, which stands in the midst of the sands of Arabia, any of the temples or monuments, though of remote antiquity, lean from the perpendicular, or have suffered from the same cause. Is it that Frederic, though he loves to build, consults principally his own gratification, or vanity, regardless of posterity? It certainly

tainly was not thus, that Pericles embellished Athens; or that Agrippa and Adrian constructed the edifices intended to transmit their memories to distant times. Yet in taste and the protection of all the fine arts, no less than in military fame, the King has ever been emulous to rival the greatest names of Greece or Rome.

Scarcely above a quarter of a mile from Potzdam, on a pleasing eminence, commanding a view of the city, the river Havel, and the adjacent country, stands the little palace of "Sans Souci." In celebrity, though not in magnitude or splendor, it may vie with Versailles, with the Escorial, or the Vatican, the most expensive fabrics of modern vanity and grandeur. The building is far from magnificent, consisting only of a long range of apartments on the ground, constructed by Frederic, not long after his accession to the Crown. It was there, in the early part of the present reign, that Voltaire, Maupertuis, Bielfield, Algarotti, Manstein, D'Ar-

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gens, Kœning, and so many other extraordinary men, were accustomed frequently to hold their meetings, and to discuss the most interesting questions of science or of philosophy, in company with the King. That period of time terminated with the memorable war which began in 1756, when occupations of a more urgent and imperious nature broke up their society. During near seven years he neither beheld his capital, nor “Sans Souci,” which were both more than once in possession of the Austrians or the Russians. They nevertheless spared, and protected it from outrage. Except Voltaire, Frederic is now the sole survivor of that great knot; and here he passes in a retirement, partly Epicurean, partly philosophic, the whole of the Summer and Autumn, when he is not absent at the reviews in Silesia, or on the Vistula. At “Sans Souci,” he affects to divest himself of the cares and fatigues attached to Royalty; to unbend his mind from State affairs, and to live for society, friendship,

friendship, and knowledge. No visitor of whatever rank intrudes, unasked, on the privacy of his retreat : but the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic, as well as his brother Prince Frederic, each, have apartments in the palace ; and when there, they constantly dine at the royal table.

The central chamber of “ Sans Souci,” which is the eating room, is small, but beautiful ; the figure oval ; and architecture, as well as sculpture, have united towards its decoration. Italy and Egypt furnished the marble with which the floor is inlaid ; and the Corinthian pillars that support the roof, were dug out of the quarries of Carrara. Two statues of exquisite workmanship, stand in niches on either side the door ; and in all the furniture, no less than in the ornaments, are displayed luxury and taste. In order to render it habitable, a warmer and more genial climate is requisite. On the shore of Baiæ or of Sorrento, such a retreat would be supremely delightful ; but here, during ten months of
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the year, we shiver while we admire. In summer the King constantly dines there; and adjoining it are three chambers, one within the other, peculiarly appropriated to his own use.

The first, which is a drawing-room of very moderate dimensions, but elegant and adorned with a few paintings; unlike the generality of German rooms, has a chimney. Frederic, who prefers comfort to grandeur, has discovered that nothing can compensate for the cheerful and vivifying influence of a fire. The body may indeed be completely warmed by the equal diffusion of heat from a stove; but the mind, the temper, and the fancy, receive animation as well as heat, from the sight of a blazing hearth. The King is too well read in Horace and in Tibullus, not to feel how classical a warmth is bestowed by the "*ligna super foco.*" It is one of the many proofs that might be adduced, how superior he is, in little, as well as in greater things, to the generality of German Princes,

Princes, who never *see* a fire, and are satisfied with *feeling* its operation. Near the chimney was placed a sofa, very dirty, and much worn by the King's boots. Here he writes, reads, composes, and dispatches business.

Next to it is the music-room; an amusement of which Frederic, at every period of his life, has been fond. The flute was, for a long time, his favorite instrument; but he has, not without reluctance, been obliged to renounce this elegant gratification, on account of the weakness of his lungs; and he now performs on the harpsichord. A very fine one stood in the apartment; and on a large marble table, tumbled together in confusion, lay Sonatas, petrefactions, and a variety of curiosities, mineral, metallic, and literary. Only one painting found place; a portrait of the Emperor Joseph the Second, lately sent from Vienna. He doubtless retains it there, as William the Third would have preserved that of Louis the Fourteenth, or as Alexan-

der would have done that of Darius. To the Court of Vienna, Frederic looks with natural and unceasing solicitude. He is neither lulled into security by treaties, nor deceived by protestations. Conscious that the Austrian Cabinet will seize the first occasion of regaining Silesia, and of humbling the family of Brandenburg, he keeps his antagonist constantly before his eyes.

In the third and innermost chamber, his Majesty sleeps: but, on first entering it, the precise place is not easily discoverable; a large recess, gilded and designed for a bed of state, remaining unoccupied. Behind a screen, in one corner of the room, on a little camp bed, or rather couch, scarcely three feet wide, he constantly reposes. The whole furniture, as well as the screen itself, are of pale blue satin, and at the foot is an alarum clock. Accustomed to a military life, and inured to hardships, he prefers this bed to one of a larger size. In the gardens, almost close to the palace, is the gallery of paintings that

that he has constructed: the walls, as well as the floor of which, are entirely incrufted with marble. Though the collection can neither compare in magnitude, with that of Dresden, or of Duffeldorf, it contains many valuable pieces, Italian and Flemish. He ufually paffes an hour or more there almoft every day, when not prevented by more important occupations. Vanderwerff and Rubens are his favorite mafters.

I drove about a mile through the gardens of “Sans Souci,” to the new palace; a magnificent ftructure erected by the King fince the conclufion of the peace of Hubertsburg in 1763, and only finifhed a few years ago. The front is grand, and the ftyle noble, but capricious and fingular; differing in fome points from the commonly eftablifhed rules of architecture. After contemplating its vaft extent, its fuperb furniture, its numerous apartments, capable of lodging the whole Royal Family, together with their attendants; we only
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lament that it stands in a sandy plain, destitute of cheerfulness or beauty. It is indeed, difficult to assign a reason why a Prince so economical, and so much an enemy to useless pomp, should construct a second Versailles among the sands of Brandenburg. Was it not done, in order to convince all Europe, that the long, ruinous and expensive war which he sustained, has neither impoverished him, nor exhausted his finances? Except during the Great Duke of Russia's visit to him last year, he has scarcely ever lodged in it a single night; and perhaps he will never inhabit it more. Content with having reared so superb an edifice, he leaves it to be occupied by his successors.

Notwithstanding these palaces and gardens, adorned by art, whose effect is increased by the external beauty and regularity of Potzdam, the mind wants something on which to repose. After the first emotions of curiosity and admiration have subsided, we look round for comfort, plenty, and

and felicity. But, banished by the hand of military severity, they are not any where to be found. No festive peasants are seen along the sides of the melancholy Havel, employed in the occupations or recreations of a country life. It seems to me that Homer might have written his "Iliad," or Voltaire his "Henriade," at Potzdam: but, Virgil could never have composed his "Georgics," nor Theocritus, his "Idylliums," under the shade of Frederic's laurels. No rural or pastoral images present themselves to the imagination. Guards and Hussars constitute half the inhabitants; and even they seem rather detained by force, than resident from inclination, loyalty, or adherence. While I remained there, I thought perpetually of what Cicero said to Marcellus; "Wherever you are, recollect that you are equally within the power of the conqueror." The Prussian Monarchy itself sometimes reminds me of a vast prison, in the gloomy centre of which appears the great keeper, occupied in the care of
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his captives. The air, which I am now breathing, seems lighter than in Brandenburg, the human face more cheerful, the animal man more happy, and the aspect of nature itself more grateful. I quitted the dominions of Frederic, penetrated with admiration of his talents, his victories, and his achievements: but, with sentiments such as we experience on leaving a magnificent castle, surrounded with moats and battlements, where emblems of restraint continually force themselves on the eye, or the imagination. After my departure from Potzdam, I reached the Saxon frontiers in a few hours; for the distance is very inconsiderable. Not only the soil becomes fertile, but the cultivation is better; and an air of plenty, mixed with content, is visible in every countenance, on entering the territories of Saxony. It is impossible to express how pleasing is the effect of this change, on the mind.

LETTER VIII.

*Position of Dresden, local and political—
Conduct of the King of Prussia, towards the
Saxons, in the last war.—The Court.—
Change, since the Death of Augustus the
Third.—Saxon Women.—Prince Charles of
Saxony.—Story of the Apparition of the Che-
valier de Saxe, raised by Schrepfer.—Re-
flections on it.—Death of Schrepfer.*

DRESDEN, November 23, 1777.

IT is difficult to imagine a greater tran-
sition, than from the Prussian, to the
Saxon dominions; or a contrast more
striking, than is presented by Berlin and
Dresden. I am charmed with this city;
with its environs, with its society, and
with its general aspect. The sandy plains
of Brandenburg are here exchanged for
a rich, finely undulated, and populous
country, covered with marks of opu-
lence, industry, and freedom. Instead of
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the melancholy and deserted magnificence of Berlin, we find a smaller capital, less regular in its construction; but cheerful, elegant, and in a situation the most picturesque. It retains indeed, in many parts, the frightful vestiges of bombardments, conflagrations, and ravages, principally inflicted by Frederic, during the course of the late war. Never, perhaps, was any situation, politically considered, more unfortunate. All the local or physical advantages which the Saxon capital enjoys, are dearly purchased by its exposed position. Placed between two great rival powers, who are perpetually contending for superiority, the Elector is under a necessity on every rupture, of joining one or the other. If, as in the late war, he allies with Austria; his dominions, nay his capital and his palaces, are occupied, burnt, and demolished by the Prussians. Augustus the Third, King of Poland, grandfather to the present Elector, experienced this truth in its full extent.

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Driven from Dresden, he passed most of the concluding years of his reign, in a sort of inglorious exile from his paternal dominions, at Warsaw, among his elective subjects, the Poles. Does he take part against the Court of Vienna? He is, if possible, exposed to greater calamities. The Bohemian frontiers are scarcely four leagues distant; and a body of Croats, or Pandours, secretly detached by the enemy, may carry off the Elector himself, if he venture to take the diversion of hunting at Moritzburg, or at Pilnitz, two of his palaces in the vicinity of Dresden.

Yet, under all these disadvantages, in the short time which has elapsed since the conclusion of the late peace; such are the inherent superiorities of the soil of Saxony, such the industry of its inhabitants, and such the wisdom, economy, and benignity of the present Government, that, except in Dresden itself, I see few marks of misfortune. Frederic's Generals, from necessity more than inclination, were reduced to

to burn the suburbs in 1758; but he directed his bombs against the finest public edifices, during the siege in 1760. Animated by personal resentment towards Count Bruhl, first minister and favorite of Augustus the Third, to whose influence and counsels he attributed the hostile part taken by his master; the King descended to manifest his indignation against that nobleman, in a manner unworthy of so great a Prince. He not only destroyed Count Bruhl's palaces; but even caused, it is said, the pavilions and statues in his gardens, to be mutilated or defaced: a state in which many of them still remain at this hour. Such a revenge, if true, resembles more the impotent fury of Cambyfes, or of Caracalla, than the dignified resentment which should characterize a Sovereign, by whom the arts have been always cherished. His enemies by no means retaliated with equal severity on Berlin, or on Potzdam, of both which, for a short time, they were repeatedly masters;

masters ; and which, though they plundered and ransomed, they neither defaced, nor demolished. During the winter of 1756, when Frederic occupied Dresden, he was accustomed to pass much of his leisure in the celebrated gallery of paintings constructed by Augustus the Third. It is by far the finest collection of that nature, in the north of Europe, and does honor to the taste as well as magnificence, of the late King of Poland. I confess however, that I am less struck with the "Notté" of Corregio, opposite to which Frederic used to cause his chair to be placed, than with many other pieces in the gallery.

Of the Saxon Court, though I have been presented to the Elector, I am incompetent to speak with information, from so short a residence. A glance suffices, nevertheless, to shew that it scarcely retains any traces of the splendor, which characterized it under the reigns of Augustus the Second and Third. Those Princes, in addition to their hereditary possessions, were by election Kings of Poland ; and

Dresden, from the beginning of the present century, down to the year 1756, might vie with Paris itself in the arts of luxury. But, the accumulated calamities of war, under which Saxony groaned during more than six years, nearly extinguished industry, and impoverished every class of the people. The reigning Elector, economical, laborious, and neither attached to pleasure, nor to exhibitions of pomp, wisely represses every tendency to expence. Occupied meritoriously in recovering his dominions from the ravages of Frederic, no less than from the effect of the profusion of his predecessors; he gives no part of his revenues, to mistresses, to dancers, to artists, or to public performers in any line.

When I recollect the descriptions left us of Dresden under Augustus the Second, by Lady Wortley Montagu, by Pollnitz, and by many other writers; I am tempted to think that I read of some other place. Encampments, shews, and diversions, perpetually succeeding, to which strangers eagerly crowded from all the kingdoms of Europe,

Europe, rendered it at once the most amusing and splendid Court in Germany. That Prince, whose bodily strength equalled all that fable attributes to Ajax or to Theseus, was formed to excel in manly exercises of every kind. Pleasure, varied in a thousand forms, seemed to constitute the only occupation of his reign. Banquets, or rather Bacchanalian Orgies, such as the Regent Duke of Orleans, nearly at the same time, was accustomed to celebrate in the "Palais Royal," were continually held by Augustus. The most beautiful women of Poland and of Germany, allured by his liberality and munificence, strove for the transitory possession of his affections. It is in vain that you would now seek for beauty in the Saxon drawing-room. Except the Countess Lofs, I have not seen a single woman of condition here, who has any pretensions to be called handsome. Even Madame de Lofs, if critically examined, may rather be denominated elegant and pleasing, than superior in personal charms. If however, the upper ranks can furnish so

few models for the painter, it by no means follows, that the sex has degenerated within the last fifty years, in Saxony. Among the middle orders, and among the peasants, the most charming figures are found ; far superior, in my opinion, to those ordinarily seen in other parts of the German Empire. I have often been inclined to imagine, though it is perhaps ideal, that there is in the air, climate, and sky of Dresden and its environs, something more favourable to beauty, than in Hanover, Brandenburg, or Bavaria.

Among the Princes of the Electoral family to whom I have been presented, Prince Charles, uncle to the reigning Elector, claims particular notice. He is here commonly denominated Duke of Courland, the States of that Dutchy having chosen him for their Sovereign, by the influence and protection of Elizabeth, late Empress of Russia ; as his uncle, the famous Marshal Saxe, had been, at an earlier period of the present century. With that Princess's reign expired his transitory elevation ; and
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the exiled Duke Biren, recalled by Peter the Third from Siberia, resumed his suspended rights. Prince Charles of Saxony is not only elegant in his person and manners; but, highly amiable and accomplished. He and the Princess his wife, who was a Polish lady of the family of Crasinsky, inhabit the palace here in Dresden, which belonged to the late Chevalier de Saxe his uncle, one of the many natural sons of Augustus the Second.

In the great gallery, where I was presented to Prince Charles three days since, was performed the memorable scene of raising the apparition of the Chevalier de Saxe. Never, perhaps, was a more impudent, or a more successful experiment tried upon human weakness and credulity. As it happened only about four years ago, and as many persons of the first rank and consideration in this country were present, the principal circumstances attending it, are well known and remembered. But, the ridicule which has attached to it, and the marked disapprobation expressed by the

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Electeur towards any repetition of such experiments, render all those who witnessed it extremely shy of relating the transaction. It was not without difficulty, after repeated solicitation, that I obtained from one of the gentlemen who assisted at it, the recital which I am about to make. He is a man of sense, courage, and intelligence. I suppress his name; but, you may form from it some estimate of the human mind in this part of Europe; which in many respects, is certainly more open to superstitious impressions, than with us. The Germans, almost universally, even those of the soundest and most cultivated understandings, believe in the existence of familiar spirits; in whose train follow witches, ghosts, and the whole family of invisible agents. If however, we incline to consider such weakness with pity or contempt, we should recollect, that similar proofs of human infirmity have been given by turns, in every European capital. The miracles, performed in the church-yard of St. Medard, at Paris, under Louis the Fifteenth's reign,

reign, which were only terminated by the royal interposition, are not yet forgotten. Scarcely fifteen years, I believe, are elapsed, since London had its "Chevalier de Saxe," in the memorable Cock-Lane ghost.

The man who here exhibited so extraordinary a proof of his art; for such it must, in every case, be esteemed; was a person of the name of Schrepfer, who originally resided at Leipzig, of which city he was a native, and where he kept a coffee-house. But, his business not producing him either as much profit, or as much distinction as he aspired to possess, he pretended to study magic, and to have acquired many secrets connected with that imaginary science. He boldly asserted that he had intercourse with, and a control over spirits, whom he could summon, command, and cause to disappear, if not altogether at his pleasure, yet by the force of his invocations. These agents he had the ingenuity and effrontery to divide into three classes, the friendly, the evil, and the neutral; all of whom he

knew how to distinguish at their approach, or on their appearance, by the noises which preceded and attended them. Whenever he affected to exert his magical powers, he always began by calling to his assistance the benevolent spirits; in order, as he said, to defend him against the attacks of the malignant ones. Pretensions so extraordinary, sustained by some exhibitions which impressed the spectators with astonishment, soon procured him no little reputation.

Schrepfer, about this time, while he still resided at Leipzig, had given offence to Prince Charles of Saxony, by expressions relative to him, of an unbecoming or insolent nature. The Prince irritated at such conduct, ordered an officer belonging to his household to repair to Leipzig, and there to inflict on Schrepfer, in his name, personal chastisement. His orders were exactly executed: but Schrepfer, though he made no other resistance, running into a corner of the room, threw himself on his knees, and loudly invoked his invisible allies to come to his assistance. Their visible appearance

pearance or interposition were however unnecessary, in order to rescue him from violence: the officer, it is asserted, having been so much alarmed at the invocation and its possible consequences, as to quit the chamber with precipitation.

A circumstance of such notoriety, as well as so degrading in itself to Schrepfer, induced him to leave Leipzig. After an absence of some time, he appeared at Dresden, where he assumed a fictitious name, and announced that he was a colonel in the service of France. In that quality he even made an attempt to be presented to the Elector; but Monsieur de Marbois, who acted as Chargé d'Affaires in the absence of the French envoy, refused to carry him to Court. His real name soon became known; and his pretences to skill in magic attracting many followers, his reputation speedily reached Prince Charles. It was accompanied with such extraordinary accounts of Schrepfer's powers, as to induce that Prince to make every exertion for obliterating the recollection of the indignity lately offered him.

As

As a step towards it, he did not hesitate to go in person to the "Hotel de Pologne," an inn where Schrepfer lodged; and in presence of various witnesses, to ask his pardon for the blows given him, as well as to offer every amends that the nature of the affront admitted. Schrepfer, flattered by such a condescension, having accepted the apologies, the Prince then requested to see some proofs of his supernatural art. It is pretended that he exhibited many; all of which only tended to augment the Prince's admiration, and to stimulate his curiosity for further specimens.

But, the most difficult operation of magic in all ages, has been to raise departed spirits from the tomb; a prodigy which Schrepfer made no secret of his ability to perform. Prince Charles having earnestly, as well as repeatedly besought it; after many refusals, real or affected, obtained at length a reluctant promise to present before his eyes an apparition; for Schrepfer artfully professed the greatest repugnance and disinclination to the act, as being perilous to himself, and
attended

attended with various circumstances of horror. It only remained therefore, to fix on the spirit to be summoned. After long consideration the Chevalier de Saxe was named, and Schrepfer undertook to produce his ghost before a select company. The place chosen for the experiment, was Prince Charles's Palace in Dresden. But, as it was well known that the Elector having the misfortune to be neither credulous, nor inclined to permit such exhibitions in his capital, might disapprove and prohibit it, the strictest secrecy was observed previous to the affair.

The Chevalier de Saxe, third in order of birth, among the natural sons of Augustus the Second, King of Poland, was only half brother to the famous Marshal Saxe, as they were by different mothers. In right of his, who was a Princess Lubomirska, of a very illustrious Polish family, the Chevalier inherited considerable property in that country, as well as in Saxony. He resided principally in Dresden, and died only
a few

a few years ago, at his palace in this city; which his nephew Prince Charles, who was his principal heir, occupied after his decease. In addition to his maternal estates, the Chevalier possessed a vast income from his military and other appointments in the Electoral service; and as he left no issue, he was supposed to have amassed great sums. Reports had been circulated, that money was concealed in the palace; but no one pretended to ascertain the precise place where it was deposited. If his spirit could be compelled to appear, that interesting secret might be extorted from him. Thus curiosity combining with avarice, or at least with the hope of discovering a considerable treasure, prompted Prince Charles to name his uncle, as the object of the experiment.

On the appointed night; for Schrepfer naturally preferred darkness, as not only more private in itself, but better calculated for the effect of incantations; the company assembled. They were nineteen in number, of whom I personally know several,

several, who are persons of consideration, character, and respectability. When they were met in the great gallery of the palace, the first object of all present was to secure the windows and doors, in order equally to prevent intrusion or deception. As far as precaution could effect it, they did so, and were satisfied that nothing except violence could procure access or entrance. Schrepfer then acquainted them, that the act which he was about to perform, would demand all their firmness; and advised them to fortify their nerves by partaking of a bowl of punch, which was placed upon the table. Several of them, (indeed, as I believe, all except one or two,) thinking the exhortation judicious, very readily followed it; but, the gentleman from whom I received these particulars, declined to profit by the advice. "I am come here," said he to Schrepfer, "to be present at raising an apparition. Either I will see all, or nothing. My resolution is taken, and no inducement can make me put any thing within my lips."

Another

Another of the company, who preserved his presence of mind, placed himself close to the principal door, in order to watch if any one attempted to open or force it. These preparatory steps being taken, the great work began with the utmost solemnity.

Schrepfer commenced it, by retiring into a corner of the gallery, where kneeling down, with many mysterious ceremonies he invoked the spirits to appear, or rather to come to his aid; for it is allowed that none were ever visible. A very considerable time elapsed before they obeyed; during which interval, he laboured apparently under great agitation of body and mind, being covered with a violent sweat, and almost in convulsions, like the Pythones of antiquity. At length, a loud clatter was heard at all the windows on the outside; which was soon followed by another noise, resembling more the effect produced by a number of wet fingers drawn over the edge of glasses, than any thing else to which it could

could well be compared. This sound announced, as he said, the arrival of his good or protecting spirits, and seemed to encourage him to proceed. A short time afterwards a yelling was heard, of a frightful and unusual nature, which came, he declared, from the malignant spirits, whose presence, as it seems, was necessary and indispensable to the completion of the catastrophe.

The company were now, at least the greater part, electrified with amazement, or petrified with horror; and of course fully prepared for every object which could be presented to them. Schrepfer continuing his invocations, the door suddenly opened with violence, and something that resembled a black ball or globe, rolled into the room. It was invested with smoke or cloud, in the midst of which appeared to be a human face, like the countenance of the Chevalier de Saxe; much in the same way, it would seem, that Corregio or Hannibal Carrache have represented Jupiter appearing to Semelé. From this form issued a loud

loud and angry voice, which exclaimed in German, "Carl, was wolte du mit mich?" "Charles, what wouldst thou with me?" "Why dost thou disturb me?"

Language, as may be supposed, can ill describe the consternation produced among the spectators at such a sight. Either firmly persuaded that the appearance which they beheld, was spiritual and intangible; or deprived of resolution to approach and attempt to seize it; they appear to have made no effort to satisfy themselves of its incorporeal nature. The Prince, whose impious curiosity had summoned his uncle's ghost, and to whom, as the person principally responsible, the spectre addressed itself; far from manifesting coolness, or attempting reply, betrayed the strongest marks of horror and contrition. Throwing himself on his knees, he called on God for mercy; while others of the terrified party earnestly besought the magician to give the only remaining proof of his art for which they now were anxious, by dismissing the apparition.

rition. But Schrepfer, though apparently willing, found, or pretended to find, this effort beyond his power. However incredible, absurd, or ridiculous it may be thought, the persons who witnessed the scene, protest that near an hour elapsed, before, by the force of his invocations, the spectre could be compelled to disappear. Nay, when at length Schrepfer had succeeded in dismissing it; at the moment that the company began to resume a degree of serenity, the door, which had been closed, burst open again, and the same hideous form presented itself anew to their eyes. The most resolute and collected among them, were not proof to its second appearance, and a scene of universal dismay ensued. Schrepfer, however, by reiterated exorcisms or exertions, finally dismissed the apparition. The terrified spectators soon dispersed, overcome with amazement, and fully satisfied, as they well might be, of Schrepfer's supernatural powers.

Having thus related as seriously and circumstantially as I am able, the principal

facts relative to the affair in question, it is natural to ask my own opinion of the story; and to demand whether I can explain or account for it in any rational manner. To such inquiries I must frankly reply, that I can neither give any satisfactory solution of it, nor have I heard any attempted, except the obvious one of human credulity and terror, operated upon by imposture and deception. But, the manner in which so wonderful an illusion was produced, I am, in common with every person here, at a loss to understand. I believe, no one has yet clearly explained how the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood is performed; though, out of Naples, I imagine few persons attribute it to miraculous or supernatural interposition. We know from experience, how prodigious are the deceptions practised in and upon optics. Nineteen men, met together for the avowed purpose of seeing an apparition, and believing that it is in human power to render a departed spirit visible, are already half subdued to any thing, however gross. Night, darkness,
and

and the imposing solemnity of magic invocations, bereave the strongest minds of their self-possession. A bold and artful impostor might then trample on their reason, and present to their eyes some hideous figure properly accoutred for the occasion. It must, however, always excite some astonishment and more regret, that among near twenty persons, not one should have endeavoured to lay hands on the spectre. Its second appearance is likewise a circumstance very difficult to account for, as it was unnecessary in order to produce conviction, which had been fully effected. That it was a deception, no man of sound understanding will doubt; but how it was managed or produced, the persons who were duped, have not yet discovered. They are all, or nearly all, still alive in this country, and they by no means boast of their adventure, or derive from it any sort of vanity. On the contrary, independent of the ridicule, they all feel and express the utmost repugnance to relating, or even recollecting

a scene, which has impressed on their imagination so much horror. Their friends dread and deprecate a renewal of the images then presented to those who were present; and a lady earnestly besought of me, not to press her husband on a subject, of which he could never think or converse without passing a sleepless night. We must be content therefore to resolve it into German credulity or superstition, and congratulate ourselves on our superiority to such puerile terrors.

The story no sooner spread through Dresden, than the Elector expressed his disapprobation of such scenes, and his peremptory injunctions not to repeat them. Schrepfer soon retired to his native city, Leipzig; where his fame accompanied him, and drew after him a crowd of disciples or votaries. To them he continued to give, as is confidently asserted here, numerous and astonishing proofs of his supernatural power, some of which I have heard related; but after the specimen that I have detailed,

detailed, all others would be at once tedious and superfluous. Schrepfer did not long enjoy his celebrity, and his death is not the least extraordinary part of his history. Three gentlemen, whom he had in some measure initiated into his mysteries; for he professed to instruct in the science of magic; were promised by him an exhibition more wonderful than any at which they had yet assisted. For this purpose they attended him into the wood of Rosendaal, which is at a small distance without the gates of Leipzig. It was in summer, before the sun rose, between three and four o'clock in the morning. When they came to a certain part of the grove, he desired them to stay a little, while he went on one side, to make the requisite invocations. After waiting a few minutes, they heard the report of a pistol. Running to the spot, they found that he had shot himself, and was already without sense. He soon afterwards expired. All those who believe him to have had intercourse with evil spirits, affirm that he was tor-

mented by them perpetually, which rendering his life miserable, induced him to have recourse to a pistol. I imagine however, you will think with Horace, that it is not necessary to call in supernatural interference, in order to account for the violent end of such a man. He has left behind him many profelytes; but, I believe, no one who pretends to equal knowledge of his secrets.

It is probable that my next letter will be from Prague, or from Vienna.

LETTER IX.

Journey from Dresden, through Prague, to Vienna.

—State of that Capital, and of the Imperial Court, at the close of the year 1777.

VIENNA, December 20, 1777.

THREE weeks are nearly elapsed since I arrived in this city; but, before I enter on any thing connected with it, let me mention briefly some particulars of my journey through Bohemia. I left Dresden with regret, on the 24th of November, at midnight, in the midst of a heavy snow, and found myself at day-break, near the frontiers of Saxony. At a miserable village among the mountains, called Peterfwalda, I entered the Austrian dominions: but such was the severity of the weather, and the depth of the snows, that it was with difficulty the carriage could proceed, or be prevented from oversetting. The road lay through defiles for several leagues, bounded

by precipices to the left, that overhang the river Elbe; and of which I could give you a description, if it had not been already much better done many years ago, by Lady Wortley Montagu, when she travelled the same road. I drove it, as she did, by night; and neither the danger nor the difficulties are diminished since her time. Passing through Lowositz, famous for the battle fought there in 1756, I got to Prague in about thirty-eight hours after leaving Dresden.

My stay was much too short to allow me, if I had the inclination, to give you any accurate description of Prague. The situation is wild and romantic; the city large, but not cheerful, except in those parts that lie on the banks of the river Moldaw, by which it is intersected. Prague is, in fact, only the deserted capital of a dependant kingdom, lost among the numerous and widely scattered provinces of the House of Austria. Its possession has been disputed in almost every age; and the ground on
all

all sides, like that of Troy in antiquity, as marked out by battles, which render it classic in the history of Germany. But, they have not the same celebrity; *carent quia vate sacro*. On my journey through Bohemia, Moravia, and Upper Austria, I only stopped to change horses, and arrived in this city on the 30th of November.

Two days ago I was presented by Sir Robert Keith, to the Empress Queen, and afterwards to the Emperor Joseph. Maria Theresa received us in the deepest weeds, in a chamber hung with black velvet, on the third story of the palace. She has neither worn any other dress, nor inhabited any other apartments, since the decease of the late Emperor her husband, more than twelve years ago. Her person retains no traces of her former beauty; but her manners are benign, gracious, and obliging. Over the doors of the room, I remarked the portraits of her grandfather Leopold, and of his deliverer, John Sobieski, King of Poland. In compliance with the antient etiquette of the Imperial Court,

Court, she is always alone, when she gives audience to foreign Ministers, as is likewise her son the Emperor.

This capital, in common with Germany, enjoys at present the most complete serenity; and all the pleasures of the winter are already begun, among which those of the table seem not to be forgotten. Prince Kaunitz, Prince Colloredo, and a number of the first Ministers or Nobility, do the honors of Vienna to strangers, with equal hospitality and magnificence. The Court is much enlivened by the presence of the Archduchess of Milan, and her husband the Archduke Ferdinand, who are lately arrived here from Lombardy, on a visit to the Empress Queen. Maria Theresa, sinking in years; divided between her religious observances, and her civil duties; occupied alternately in business of state, and in exercises of devotion; hopes to pass the evening of her stormy reign in peace, surrounded by her numerous family. She has lived to extinguish the long hereditary enmities between

between the Houses of Bourbon and Austria. Three Princeffes, her daughters, the Queens of France and Naples, and the Archduchefs of Parma, who fealed the reconciliation by their refpective marriages, form the beft guarantees for its ftability. On the fide of Pruffia, there appears to be no immediate or obvious fubject of apprehenfion. Ruffia, if not in clofe alliance with the cabinet of Vienna, at leaft is not hostile; and the Turks are here confidered rather as objects of plunder or conquest, than as capable of exciting alarm.

The Emperor, on his part, is not lefs fully occupied than his mother; but bufinefs feems to be his principal purfuit, and gratification. Emulous of Frederic, he wears like him a uniform on all occafions, and manifefts the warmeft affection for his foldiery. Hunting is the only diverfion in which he indulges, unlefs we account travelling among the number of his amusements; but even his travels are almoft folely directed to objects of information. He has already
accurately

accurately inspected the far greater part of his own dominions ; he is recently returned from France ; and I am told, that he projects soon to visit England.

Prince Kaunitz, first Minister of Maria Theresa during three-and-twenty years, continues still to guide the councils of his mistress. To him is due the merit of terminating the quarrels between the House of Austria and France, as the measure was peculiarly his own. Though he appears to pass much of his time between his Manege, the society which meets every evening at his palace, and the diversion of billiards ; yet he finds leisure for directing all the complicated affairs of the Empress Queen, and possesses an almost unlimited authority. Like her, declined in years, he nevertheless appears to be fresh and vigorous.

Prince Colloredo, as Vice-Chancellor of the Empire, is the first Minister of Joseph the Second in his Imperial capacity ; but he is supposed to enjoy far less of the private confidence of his master, than Marshal Lacy.

I hear

I hear little of Laudohn, who occupies so distinguished a place in the esteem of Frederic, and who performed such eminent services in the late war. Peace has reduced him to comparative insignificance. In the personal affections of the Empress Queen, her daughter the Archduchess Christina is believed to have no rival. Her husband, Prince Albert of Saxony, is Governor of Hungary; but they do not the less reside in Vienna during the greater part of the winter. Among the foreign Ministers, the French Embassador alone seems to enjoy a marked consideration. The close connexion between this Court and that of Versailles; added to the magnificence in which he lives, as representative of Louis the Sixteenth; conduce to give the Baron de Breteuil a vast superiority over every other member of the "Corps Diplomatique." It is no where more visible than in the drawing-room of Prince Kaunitz himself.

Such are the outlines of the Court and Cabinet of Vienna at the close of 1777,
and

and such the principal persons who direct its movements. They will serve as landmarks, by which to enable you to form a judgment on the facts or events, which may occur during my stay here. In a short time I shall write again.

LETTER X.

Death of the Elector of Bavaria.—Circumstances of his Illness.—Arrival of the Intelligence at Vienna.—Communication of it to the Empress Queen.—Her Conduct.—Seizure of Lower Bavaria by the Austrians.—Speculations upon the probable Consequences of that Event.

VIENNA, January 9, 1778.

I LITTLE imagined, when I concluded my last letter, and described to you the state of profound repose, which this Court and capital presented on my arrival, that it would be so soon disturbed. Every thing then seemed to announce a continuance of public tranquillity; but, the unexpected death of the Elector of Bavaria has shaken the foundations on which it rested, and may, not improbably, be the prelude to new scenes of contest between Austria and Prussia. Laudohn, who for several years has lived in obscurity, will perhaps be again opposed to Frederic in the field.

field. We have not yet recovered the astonishment into which this event has thrown us, and we are lost in speculations upon its possible consequences. Before I enter further on so important a subject, let me relate to you the principal circumstances which threaten to involve Germany, and perhaps Europe, in fresh calamities.

The late Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, was the son of that unfortunate Emperor, Charles the Seventh, who, after a short and miserable elevation to the Imperial dignity, saw himself driven from his hereditary dominions; and soon afterwards expired at Munich, under the accumulated weight of misfortunes and diseases. It is he, whom Johnson, in his translation of the tenth Satire of Juvenal, has beautifully selected, as a conspicuous proof of modern pre-eminence in rank and in wretchedness. You probably recollect the description, which is one of the most animated ever drawn, and which the circumstances of

the moment in which I am now writing, render peculiarly interesting:

“ The bold Bavarian, in a luckless hour,
“ Tries the dread summit of Cæsarean power;
“ With unexpected legions bursts away,
“ And sees defenceless realms accept his sway.
“ Short sway ! Fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
“ The Queen, the Beauty, sets the world in arms.”

It may indeed be accounted among the wonderful revolutions of the present age, that Maria Theresa should now retaliate precisely in the same manner, upon the death of the *son*, the injuries which she sustained from the *father*. Already a very considerable portion of Bavaria has been seized on by her troops, and is incorporated with her dominions.

No event could have been more improbable, a few weeks since, than the decease of the Elector of Bavaria; who was still in the vigor of his age, about fifty years old, and of a strong constitution. He had always entertained great apprehensions of the small-pox, which he never

had naturally caught, and which he had not, like Catharine the Second, the wisdom and magnanimity to anticipate by inoculation. Every precaution was ineffectual for preserving him from the attacks of that fatal distemper. A young lady of quality, Madame de Riva, who happened to be on a visit at the Court of Munich, and who lodged in the Electoral palace, was seized with the small-pox. The nature of her disease was carefully concealed from the Elector; but her grandfather having been with her at her bedside, imprudently came immediately afterwards into the room where the Elector was engaged at billiards. He had hardly remained a few minutes there, when that Prince exclaimed, "Some person here has the small-pox; I feel it!" Instantly throwing down the mace which he had in his hand, he retired to his apartment, and soon sickened. Though the symptoms, from the beginning, were very alarming, yet it is highly probable, that under judicious management he might

might have surmounted the disease. But the Bavarian physicians, who are not yet skilled in the modern treatment of the small-pox, adhered to the antient practice of warmth and the exclusion of fresh air. During some days before his decease, no hopes of a favorable change were entertained; and the result sufficiently proves that this Court was fully prepared for his dissolution. He lay in a deplorable condition for the last forty-eight hours, his head swelled to a prodigious size, and his features hardly recognizable, from the malignant nature of the distemper. On the 30th of December, last Tuesday se'nnight, during the night, he expired; and Count Hartig, the Austrian Plenipotentiary at the Court of Bavaria, lost not an instant in dispatching a messenger to Prince Kaunitz, with the intelligence.

The Courier alighted at the house of the first Minister, about half past six o'clock, on the evening of the 1st of January; which is a day of Gala, and the only one

now observed as such in the whole year. All the nobility and persons of condition in Vienna, were then about to assemble in the great drawing-room of the palace, where the Empress Queen, the Emperor, and the Archduchesses, her daughters, were present. Maria Theresa sat down to play; while the Emperor, who never touches cards, stood near her, engaged in conversation. I was present at an inconsiderable distance from them. Prince Kaunitz, having perused the dispatch from Munich, acquainting him with the Elector's death, immediately repaired to the Imperial palace, with which his own communicates by a gallery. Unwilling to excite remarks, or to attract the public attention, he did not shew himself; but sent in a person to inform the Emperor, that he was desirous to impart to his Majesty some intelligence of consequence. That Prince, who was probably aware of the nature of the news, which could not be unexpected, withdrew; but returned in a few minutes, and

and leaning over the table at which his mother was playing, he whispered some words in her ear. She instantly let fall the cards, and rising up with evident marks of emotion, quitted the apartment. As this was sudden, no one knew the cause; and the Empress's departure was so precipitate, as well as unforeseen, that the Archduchesses, her daughters, who were engaged each at a separate card-table, remained for some moments in ignorance of her having left the room. When they were made acquainted with it, they likewise threw down their cards, and followed her. We all looked at each other in astonishment, conscious that some event of moment had taken place, but uncertain of its nature. The Court broke up, and many conjectures were formed on the reasons of the Empress's conduct. Next morning it was explained, by the news of the Elector of Bavaria's death, which became public.

That event must necessarily have been considered as inevitable, for some days previous

to its actually taking place ; and the general measures to be pursued upon it, for securing, or seizing on a part of the Bavarian succession, were no doubt, as we must suppose, already settled in the Cabinet. I know however, from good authority, that on the night of the first of January, after the Empress Queen retired to her own apartments, a secret council was there held, consisting of herself, the Emperor, and Prince Kaunitz. Much difference of opinion, relative to the *extent* of territory to be claimed and occupied by the Austrian troops, then manifested itself. The first Minister having spread before their Majesties a map of Bavaria, pointed out the portions of that Electorate, to which he conceived the pretensions of Maria Theresa might wisely and justly be extended. The Emperor supported him with all his force, and urged that troops should be instantly sent to take possession of the districts in question : but the Empress, become cautious from age, averse to war, and perhaps
not

not altogether satisfied in her mind of the justice of the claims about to be set up, appeared to be very undecided. She betrayed great agitation, often repeating with earnestness in German, "In God's name, only take what we have a right to demand! I foresee that it will end in war. My wish is to end my days in peace."

Notwithstanding the Empress's reluctance to the measure of seizing by force on any part of the Bavarian territories, it was finally adopted on that night, and has been since carried into execution with incredible celerity. General Langlois, and Count Clairfait, by orders from the Court, entered on the newly claimed districts, without an hour's delay. They met, as might be supposed, with no resistance from the Bavarian or Palatine Government; and are already in possession of a very considerable tract of country. At the hour that I am writing, scarcely above a week after the reception of the news of the late Elector's death, we know here that the Imperial

Commissaries are occupied in numbering and marking the houses, throughout all the villages of Lower Bavaria. Troops are pouring in, to sustain those which were sent at first; and if no obstacles of an unexpected nature should arise, the whole transfer will be effected without shedding a drop of blood.

But, however tranquil affairs may be at present, in so early a stage of the business; we are naturally led to ask, whether they can terminate in the same manner? Will the Elector Palatine, who is heir to the Duchy of Bavaria and to every part of the succession, acquiesce in the claims of Maria Theresa and Joseph? Will his nephew and presumptive successor, the Duke of Deux-ponts, submit to be thus despoiled of a country which he considers as his future inheritance? Will the Elector of Saxony, whose mother is sister to the deceased Prince, and of course his allodial heir, take no interest in the affair? Even though all those Princes, from political weakness, or from any other motives, should tamely

allow themselves to be plundered; can Prussia look on unconcerned, while his most formidable enemy aggrandizes himself, and extends his territories? Frederic, whose vigilance never intermits, will probably interfere sooner or later, at least by negotiation, if not by arms. What are the pretensions of the Cabinet of Vienna? On what supposed right or existing treaty are they founded, and how large is their extent? On all these interesting points, relative to which we are here at present completely ignorant, a short time must enable us to form an opinion.

The late Elector of Bavaria, though an amiable, mild, and beneficent Prince, was deficient in vigor and energy of character. His facility of temper, added to the want of economy, produced numerous abuses. Possessing neither ambition nor military talents, he manifested no wish to augment his political power; and instructed by his father's example, he only aspired to maintain his dominions in peace. By the Electress
his

his wife, who was a Princess of Saxony, daughter of Augustus the Third, he has left no issue, and in him expires the *Gulielmine* Line of the Palatine House. As head of the *Rodolphine* Branch, the Elector Palatine succeeds to his territories; but the Electoral dignity becomes extinct. Charles Theodore, the new *Duke* of Bavaria, who has long since reached Munich, is a man of talents, a patron of all the fine arts, of letters, and of learning. But, the exigency of his situation demands vigor, decision, and resources of character. We shall soon see whether he means to resist, or to submit to the Austrian claims: a question which is here discussed in every society, and which may soon agitate all Europe. In my next letter I shall probably be able to speak more decidedly upon the subject.

LETTER XI.

Pacific Aspect of Affairs.—Amusements of the Court, and of Vienna.—Description of a “Course des Traineaux.”—Society of Vienna.—Beniowski.—His Adventures, and Escape from Kamschatka.

VIENNA, January 26th, 1778.

THE storm which so lately threatened to overturn the repose of this country and of Europe, appears, if we credit every concurring account, to be past. We talk here of nothing except peace, and are only occupied with amusements. The Elector Palatine has not merely submitted to the demands of Maria Theresa and Joseph, but has even ratified them by a formal stipulation. Whether the desire of tranquillity, his inability to resist so powerful a competitor, or any more concealed motives of private interest, have induced him to relinquish so large and valuable a part of the Bavarian succession, we are unacquainted. As he is however,
like

like the late Elector, his predecessor, destitute of legitimate issue, it is necessary that the Duke of Deux-ponts, his presumptive heir, should likewise acquiesce in the Austrian claims. Relative to the King of Prussia, little concern seems to be expressed, and little serious opposition on his part is expected. The Cabinet of Vienna probably relies on his infirmities, his well-known reluctance to engage again in war, and his consciousness of the state of preparation in which he would find the House of Austria. Yesterday, Prince Joseph Lobkowitz set off for Munich, to invest the Elector Palatine with the order of "the Golden Fleece," in the name of their Imperial Majesties. It is a bad exchange for his captured provinces. Indeed, his whole conduct in the transaction has not tended to raise his character even here, for magnanimity or spirit. Lampoons are publicly circulated through Vienna, in which he is treated with great severity.

While, by the rapid and successful seizure of so considerable a territory adjoining

joining to Upper Austria and Bohemia, the political power and dominions of Maria Theresa are greatly and indefinitely augmented; Vienna presents a scene of amusement and festivity. Even the Court, which is not in general cheerful, has shaken off its formality, and relaxed somewhat of its gravity. To the presence of the Archduchess of Milan, we are indebted for so unusual an exhibition of gaiety and magnificence. She is a very pleasing and amiable Princess, an Italian, daughter and heiress of the Duke of Modena. Her person is by no means beautiful, but her manners captivate universally. As she loves diversions, particularly dancing, the Empress, in compliment to her, permits balls to be given in the Imperial palace. All foreigners of condition are invited; and she never fails to be present herself in person. But, the most singular, as well as splendid spectacle which I have witnessed, is a "Course des Traineaux." Under the reigns of Charles the Sixth, and of the late

late Emperor Francis, they were common; but, Joseph the Second neither likes the amusement, nor the expence attending it, which is considerable. Several hundred carts are always employed on the preceding day, to bring snow into the city, and to scatter it through the principal streets, as otherwise the sledges could not be driven with ease or safety.

During the present month, we have already had two "Courses des Traineaux," one by day, and the other by torch-light: the first of which exhibitions produced, in my opinion, infinitely the finest effect. The Empress Queen, accompanied by the Archduchesses Maria and Christina, repaired to Marshal Haddock's house, in order to be a spectatress of them; the Emperor declining to take any active part in the amusement. The Archduchess of Milan, and her sister-in-law the Archduchess Elizabeth, whose sledges were conducted by the Archdukes Ferdinand and Maximilian, led the way. More than thirty sledges followed, drawn
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up one behind the other; in each of which was seated a lady, dressed in furs richly ornamented, and her head covered with a profusion of jewels. Behind her stands the nobleman who drives, commonly as much decorated with diamonds as the lady. The sledges themselves, which form not the least curious part of the sight, are gilt and carved with great taste, representing the figures of dragons, serpents, peacocks, or monsters; and commonly cost some thousand florins. Before each, run footmen, or Heyduques, superbly habited, carrying long poles in their hands. Even the horses are quite obscured under the multiplicity of trappings, plumes, and ornaments, with which they are loaded. The "Grand Ecuyer," or Master of the Horse, always begins the procession. In this order they drive with amazing velocity, through all the principal streets and squares of the capital, for about two hours, and finish at the Imperial palace.

Vienna

Vienna offers besides, gratifications to the mind, far superior to any pleasure that spectacles such as these, however splendid, can afford. Many of the great nobility open their houses, and several are constantly at home almost every evening. At Prince Kaunitz's, and at Prince Colloredo's, the company is particularly numerous. There, among General Officers, foreign Embassadors, prelates, ladies, and courtiers, are to be sometimes found Laudohn, confessedly the first military commander of the present age; and though still more rarely, Metastasio, the most beautiful poet in his line, of this, or, perhaps, of any period. The Emperor not unfrequently presents himself at those assemblies. As he is never announced, and is accompanied only by a single chamberlain, his entrance occasions no confusion; and it has happened to me to be for many minutes in the same room, before I have perceived him, standing behind a chair, or mixed in the crowd.

crowd. He loves to converse, and is extremely communicative. I heard him relate some of his adventures, when travelling through the Bannat of Tameswaer and some parts of Sclavonia, only a few evenings ago, with equal vivacity and humour.

Among the singular characters which Vienna furnishes at the present moment, is the celebrated Count Beniowsky. I meet him frequently in company, and have listened with admiration as well as entertainment to the recital of his adventures, which exceed in audacity every thing related of the Buccaneers in the last century, and have justly acquired him no small reputation. He is by birth a Hungarian, of a noble extraction, and not above thirty-six years old. During the period of general tranquillity which succeeded to the peace of 1763, when Poland offered almost the only field in Europe for enterprize and military talents; Beniowsky, in common with many of his country-

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men, joined the Polish confederates, who took up arms against Stanislaus and his protectors, the Russians. Their cause was unfortunate; the far greater number of those who ventured to oppose the troops of Catharine, having perished by the sword, or languished out their lives in poverty, exile, and every variety of wretchedness.

Beniowsky being taken prisoner in one of the skirmishes, among the woods near the frontiers of Hungary and Poland, was driven, with a number of other captives, to the city of Kiow in the Ukraine. They were chained, as I have heard him declare, like wild beasts, exposed to all the vicissitudes of heat and cold, the severity of which were rendered more sensible by the want of cloaths, of food, and of cleanliness. Though incapacitated by his wounds from walking, except with the assistance of crutches, he was not the less compelled to perform the march on foot; subjected to blows, and every species of indignity, as well as cruelty. More than three-fourths of

of the number expired on the road; and the survivors, among whom was Beniowsky, were transferred from Kiow to Casan. While there, he endeavored to excite an insurrection against the Russian Government, in which he failed. Having nevertheless effected his escape from Casan, he reached Peterburgh without being discovered; whence he projected to embark for some other part of Europe. He had even contracted for his passage in a Dutch ship, and was going on board; when, either by the treachery of the Captain, or by the vigilance of the police, he was seized and committed to prison.

Catharine only liberated him from confinement, to send him into exile. After travelling many weeks in a covered sledge, over a snowy waste, surrounded by almost perpetual darkness, he arrived at Tobolsky in Siberia; where he learned that he was to be further sent on to Kamschatka. Near a year elapsed between his departure from Peterburgh, and his arrival at that savage

and sequestered extremity of the Russian Empire. Having traversed the immense portion of Asia which separates Siberia from Kamtschatka, he found on his arrival a number of exiles, some among whom had been his friends and companions. After receiving fire-arms, they were ordered to provide their own subsistence, and likewise to furnish a certain number of furs and fables for the use of the Empress; those articles constituting the principal sources of her revenue.

Unsubdued by the nature of his situation, which seemed to preclude hope, as well as assistance, Beniowsky conceived the daring project of first liberating himself, and then of escaping from the dominions of Catharine. Having concerted measures for the purpose with his companions, who offered to follow and to perish with him, they attacked the Russian guard, and put them to the sword. Without losing an instant, Beniowsky marched against the fort, entered it, and cut to pieces the garrison, together

together with the governor himself, after a desperate resistance. They then seized on all the furs in the public magazines, which they put on board a vessel, constructed for the purpose of making discoveries among the Archipelago that is scattered in the unknown ocean between Asia and America. Accompanied by near a hundred of his followers, he set sail, destitute of almost any means except despair, for navigating through latitudes equally inclement, as they are unexplored by navigators.

In the course of his voyage, Beniowsky had to encounter every calamity by which human nature could be assailed. Famine, sickness, mutiny, tempest, and shipwreck, threatened by turns to terminate his romantic life and adventures. After vainly attempting to navigate north, by the Frozen Ocean that surrounds the Pole, he stood to the south; reached, he pretends, some of the islands of Japan; and was hospitably received by the natives. In the island of Formosa, rendered famous by the pretended

History of Psalmanasar, where he likewise landed; he entered (I cannot clearly understand on what pretence,) into hostilities with the natives, which were productive of very sanguinary consequences. He finally entered the river of Macao in China, whence he returned to Europe. It is impossible to contemplate such an enterprize, without a mixture of astonishment and admiration, mixed with incredulity. The expedition of the Argonauts, so celebrated in antiquity, the chiefs of which were raised by posterity to almost divine honors; cannot bear the smallest comparison in real danger or difficulty, with Beniowsky's navigation. Columbus himself had not greater impediments with which to struggle, from the fears, the insubordination, and the superstition of his followers, who were many times about to seize and to massacre him.

The French Cabinet, which under the late reign, during the period when it was governed by the Duke de Choiseul, had originally protected and even aided the
Polish

Polish confederates, extended its notice to Beniowsky. Deeply impressed with his astonishing courage and success, the Duke d'Aiguillon, Choiseul's successor, not only caused him to be graciously received in France, where he landed on his return to Europe; but has since conferred on Beniowsky various military, pecuniary, and honorary marks of the bounty of the Crown. This extraordinary adventurer was soon afterwards sent out to Madagascar, a part of the globe to which the Cabinet of Versailles has long directed its attention; and with the interior, as well as productions of which country, they are far better acquainted than ourselves, or any European nation. I am assured that he has already rendered to Louis the Sixteenth very important services there; and it is imagined that he will be again dispatched thither, to investigate more minutely the resources, commercial and political, of that unknown and extensive island. He is at present on a visit here to his native country, where

his surprizing adventures and desperate atchievements have secured him the most flattering reception. People of every rank, crowd round him to hear the story of his escape, which he recounts with a coldness, and even phlegm, that encreases its effect.

The lineaments of his countenance correspond wonderfully with his atchievements; and his whole figure, which is robust and vigorous, conveys the idea of determined intrepidity. During his campaigns in Poland, he received numerous wounds; particularly one in the haunch, which has much disabled him from exertions of activity. When he reposes his body on the wounded side, which is greatly contracted in consequence of the muscles having been intersected, he appears of a middle size. But, when he rises on the other leg, he suddenly becomes near six feet in height. It is supposed that his stay here will not be long, and that he means soon to return to France, in the military service of which Crown he is engaged. Should he ever by
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any accident fall into the hands of the Russians, Catharine would probably offer him up as a victim, to the number of her subjects whom Beniowsky put to death. But, of such an event there seems little or no probability.

In my next, I may perhaps be able to conjecture with more assurance, as to the certainty of peace. At this moment, every thing bespeaks a continuance of tranquillity.

LETTER XII.

Hostile Remonstrances of Prussia, respecting the Bavarian Succession. — Anecdotes of Marshal Lacy. — Anecdotes of General Laudohn.

VIENNA, February 16th, 1778.

SINCE I wrote last, the political sky is again become dark, and seems to portend a tempest, though perhaps it may not be immediate. The flattering indications of peace, if not vanished, are at least obscured; and Bavaria, it appears, may yet involve the Empire in war. Resistance is not however, expected from the Cabinet of Munich, nor from that of Mannheim. On the contrary, we know that the Elector Palatine, Duke of Bavaria, has already signed a treaty with this Court, by which he completely cedes the contested districts to Maria Theresa. But, from another quarter, very strong opposition has arisen. The Duke of Deux-ponts, far from acquiescing in the

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the renunciations of the Elector, his uncle, has had a confidential interview at Potzdam with Frederic, for the purpose of effectually opposing any dismemberment of his future inheritance. All the allodial, or personal property of the deceased Elector of Bavaria, is claimed by his sister, the Electress Dowager of Saxony.

Their joint reclamations might, nevertheless, be unavailing, if Prussia could be induced to remain passive. But, however averse he may be to war, the King has manifested his resolution not to permit so vast an incorporation of territory to be effected, without remonstrance. He has already united himself with Saxony, taken the troops of the Elector into his pay, and sent reiterated memorials to Prince Kaunitz, stating the injustice of the pretensions of the Imperial Court. No symptoms however of a disposition to yield, or even to concede, are visible here. The language held by Austria, is high, firm, and almost indignant. If we may believe re-

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port, or form a judgment from appearances, the Emperor desires a rupture rather than an accommodation. Never was the House of Austria in better preparation for war. Artillery, troops, finances, all are ready on the shortest notice. They reckon likewise on Frederic's age, on his inabilities of body, and reluctance to commit his fame, as well as his acquisitions, to hazard. Perhaps, they reason well. At all events, it is curious to contrast the conduct of the same Prince in 1741, with his present line of action in 1778. He began his reign by attacking Maria Theresa, without provocation; by bursting in upon Silesia, and overturning the tranquillity of Germany, in order to aggrandize his dominions. In the evening of life, desirous of peace, he slowly rouses himself from repose; remonstrates, instead of marching into Bohemia; and presents himself as a barrier against the Imperial ambition, which menaces the independance, as well as the integrity, of the Germanic System.

Already

Already various regiments, particularly several of cavalry, are under orders to march towards Bohemia and Moravia. Those of Lacy, and of Joseph Colloredo, are arrived here, in their way to Prague or to Olmutz. No one doubts, that if a war should eventually take place, the Emperor means to serve in person; but, the principal conduct of the campaign would be probably committed to the “*duo Fulmina Belli*,” Marshal Lacy, and General Laudohn. If we except the King of Prussia, and Prince Henry his brother; they may be justly accounted the greatest commanders of the present century, in their different lines. The Empress Queen is fortunate in being able to entrust her cause to such leaders. With Marshal Lacy I have the honor to be acquainted, and to meet him sometimes in private society. He is now approaching towards his sixtieth year; but, it is impossible not to perceive, that when young, he must have been very handsome. In his person he is tall and thin; his complexion fallow, and his features

features small. He has the figure, deportment, and manners of a man of quality; but, there is in them still more of the courtier and the gentleman, than of the soldier. Grave, and somewhat distant on first acquaintance, he becomes afterwards pleasing and communicative. He speaks French with equal ease and elegance; entertains magnificently, and his table is served with no less delicacy than profusion. Though now advancing fast to old age, he preserves a youthful appearance; and though he has been six times wounded by musket-balls, he enjoys perfect health; all the bullets having been extracted, without injury to his constitution. In his youth, he sacrificed to pleasure and dissipation; but at present he lives retired, mixes little with the gay world, and passes the evening of an active life, in the enjoyment of a dignified repose. Possessed of an immense fortune, partly transmitted to him by descent, and partly acquired in the course of long and honorable service; he uses it
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as one, who, while he knows the value of riches, is nevertheless superior to them. Of an elevated mind, above the little arts of intrigue, or of Court cabal; he is not less respected than beloved, by the Sovereigns whom he serves.

Lacy is by no means, like Laudohn, a soldier of fortune, though he has risen by his talents. His extraction and family are Irish, but he was born in Russia. Son of the famous Marshal Lacy, who, in conjunction with Munich, commanded the Muscovite armies against the Turks, and obtained so many victories over them in the last years of the Empress Anne; it was in that great school he first learnt the art of war. I have heard him say, that his father sent him to study at Lignitz in Silesia, and afterwards at Vienna. In 1740, about the time of Maria Theresa's accession, he entered the Austrian service, as an Ensign in the regiment of Count Brown, afterwards Marshal Brown, who was killed at the battle of Prague. Having distinguished himself
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by a thousand acts of personal courage, activity, and ability, he rose so rapidly to the rank of Major, that at the commencement of the war of 1756, he was already a Colonel, and soon became Major-General. But, to Daun's protection and friendship, he was principally indebted for his elevation: a patronage which Lacy repaid by the most essential services. Daun always had recourse to him when under embarrassments, and Lacy constantly urged the Marshal to measures of decision. I have already spoken elsewhere, of Finck's surrender at Maxen, and of the retreat from Torgau; on both which occasions, Lacy acquired immortal honor. He has been accused of not advancing to Laudohn's assistance, when that General was beaten by Frederic at Lignitz; but, the charge is universally admitted to be unjust.

A degree of coldness, approaching to rivalry, is however supposed to subsist between them, such as existed in the last century between Condé and Turenne. Their characters,

ters, manners, and talents, are indeed, very dissimilar. Lacy is not merely one of the first commanders of his time, admitted to be superior even to Laudohn in the theory of war, in the science of tactics, and in the judicious choice of ground for encampments; he is equally formed for the Cabinet and the drawing-room, as for the field. Enjoying the most distinguished place in the Emperor's confidence and affection, that Prince visits him at all hours, converses with him on matters of business while the Marshal is dressing, and consults him on every point. Nor is it only on military or political subjects, that Joseph applies to him for advice and assistance. Lacy is the depository of his most secret thoughts; participates his domestic troubles; and soothes him in those moments of dejection, disappointment, and chagrin, to which a divided sovereignty is peculiarly liable. In the difficult science of provisioning an army, Lacy has no equal; and he is allowed to be the best Adjutant-General in Europe.

rope. To him, the whole arrangement, distribution, and management of the Austrian forces is committed in time of peace. The spirit of order, sustained by judicious economy, which characterize him, enable Lacy to regulate with ease so complicated, as well as so immense a machine. When we reflect on these circumstances, we shall not be surprized that he has attained, and we must admit that he deserves, the high situation and fortune of which he is in possession.

With Laudohn I have not the happiness to be equally well acquainted, because, though he understands French tolerably well, he never converses in that language. He speaks German, and likewise Russian imperfectly, on occasions; but, in company his habitual reserve rarely forsakes him. Naturally modest, taciturn, and shy, he scarcely ever obtrudes his opinions on any subject, and rather retires from notice, than solicits admiration. As he has no house in Vienna, he resides at this time on his estate,

estate, about two leagues off, on the road to Lintz, in great privacy; coming sometimes, but rarely, to pay his Court to the Sovereign, or the Ministers. Among the latter, Prince Kaunitz alone treats him with marks of friendship and distinction. Neither his education, his manners, nor his habits, qualify him indeed for the great world. In a mixed company he is lost, unless the discourse turn upon war. Then his countenance suddenly lights up, and he becomes animated, eloquent, in a word a different man. I have witnessed with pleasure this transition.

General Laudohn, for he has not yet been created a Field Marshal, though Frederic addressed him as such at the interview of Neiss; is now about sixty-two years of age, somewhat infirm, though originally of a tough and vigorous constitution. Subject to violent disorders of the stomach and bowels, which frequently threaten his life, it is to be feared that one of these attacks may prove fatal to him.

Like Lacy, he rises in height above the middle size; but Laudohn conveys only the idea of a soldier, rough, inelegant, and inured to camps. His face is long and meagre, his features coarse and dark; more, I believe, from the effect of hardships, than from their natural formation. He wears his own hair, which time has considerably thinned, and presents to common eyes, a lank and bony figure, destitute of animation or address. Under such an exterior are concealed those talents, which have rendered him so justly celebrated, and which, on more than one occasion, have shaken the Prussian Throne. The Emperor, if he does not honor him with the same marks of personal confidence which he shews to Lacy, is nevertheless deeply impressed with a sense of his past services, and a conviction of his great abilities. As a General, the quality which peculiarly characterizes him, is the rapidity and decision of his movements. After viewing the ground, and reconnoitring the

the position of the enemy, he takes his resolution in a moment, and executes it with the velocity of lightning. He is unable to act by a long train of reflection, which only renders him irresolute, as he himself declares; and it is commonly asserted even by those who most admit his claims to superior excellence, that he is not formed to direct the complicated operations of a campaign.

Laudohn is by birth a Livonian, born in or about the year 1716, when that province was already subjected by the arms of Peter the Great. His father was only a Lieutenant in the Russian armies, of Scotch extraction, being descended from the family of Loudon, though the orthography of the name has undergone some alteration in the lapse of time, or in the change of country. It reflects no little honor on the Scottish and Irish nations, that they have given so many illustrious commanders to Europe, during the course of the present century. Keith, Brown,

Elphinstone, Lacy, Laudohn, as well as various others of inferior reputation whom I could name, in the Imperial, Russian, Saxon, and Prussian service, are proofs of the assertion. At a very early period of life, Laudohn, as much from necessity as from inclination, embraced the profession of arms; and he actually fought in the ranks, as a private soldier, under the Imperial Generals, during the war of 1733, between the Emperor Charles the Sixth and France. When peace was concluded two years afterwards, finding himself without provision of any kind, he was again compelled to seek for employment. At the other extremity of Europe, the Empress of Russia, Anne, had just engaged in hostilities with the Turks; and it is indisputable that Laudohn walked from Heidelberg in the Palatinate, to the banks of the Black Sea, with his knapsack on his shoulder. Lacy and Munich being then occupied in the siege of Oczakow, Laudohn served under them; as he did during the whole progress

progress of the war, till its termination in 1739.

Returning once more into Germany, he first attempted to enter, as a subaltern officer, into the Prussian army; but his endeavours proving ineffectual, he therefore in the end of the year 1741, or the beginning of 1742, found means to procure an Ensign's commission in the Austrian service. Frederic could not then foresee, how dear the rejection of such an officer would cost him. Laudohn, unaided by friends or connexions of any kind, rose slowly in military honors. While a Lieutenant, quartered in Hungary, he married a Slavonian woman, who possessed neither attractions of mind, nor of person. She is of an obscure family, and brought him little or no fortune. Sickly, uneducated, plain, she never appears in public; and her principal merit consists in the attachment that she feels for her husband, which rises to a sort of idolatry. They have no children, nor, as I believe, had they ever any issue.

When Laudohn attained to the rank of Captain, Prince Kaunitz first distinguished him, and honored him with proofs of peculiar esteem; a circumstance, of which that Minister is with reason vain. During the war of 1741, he was wounded, and it is the only material hurt he ever received in the course of so many campaigns.

The eminent services which he rendered to Maria Theresa between 1757 and 1763, were rewarded by her after the late peace, with the donation of an estate in Moravia. She afterwards purchased it of him for the sum of eighty thousand florins, or about seven thousand pounds sterling; and he may now be esteemed wealthy, according to the estimation of competence in Austria. His military appointments, which in time of peace, do not fall short of near a thousand pounds sterling a year, will be greatly augmented in case of a war, as there can be no doubt of his services being wanted; and his private fortune is, besides, ample. We are pleased, when we reflect that so
illustrious

illustrious a man is not subjected in his age to any privations; and that he cannot complain of the ingratitude or neglect of those whom he has served. But, if he has experienced the bounty of the Sovereign, or the protection of the Minister, he has felt not less sensibly the jealousy of the courtiers, as well as the enmity of the nobility. They treat his person with cold alienation; accuse him of being unfit, from the constitutional melancholy of his temper, to contribute to the pleasures of society; and even attempt to attribute his greatest exploits more to fortune than to merit. There are nevertheless, even in Vienna, many persons of the highest rank, who do justice to his superior abilities, and who consider him as the best prop of the Austrian greatness in a time of war.

It might be invidious, and even improper, to attempt a close comparison between two living commanders, who have distinguished themselves so much in different lines, and who may yet add new laurels to those
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which they have already acquired. We may however safely assert that Lacy's talents are more universal, Laudohn's more concentrated. One is greater in the theory of war, in the vast detail requisite for enabling an army to act with effect, and in combining or directing a variety of military operations. The other has no equal in rapid, decisive, and successful execution. Lacy is more respected at Vienna: Laudohn is more dreaded at Berlin. The former enjoys all the confidence of Joseph: the latter possesses all the esteem of Frederic. If the Austrian officer looks up to the first; the Austrian soldier has his eye fixed on the second, crowds to his standard, and esteems himself certain of victory, under such a leader. Both have performed the most signal services. But, it would be unjust to compare the affair of Maxen, or the retreat of Torgau, where Lacy acted in a subordinate capacity under Daun; with the capture of Glatz and Schweidnitz, or the victory of Landshut, in all which Laudohn commanded.

commanded without a superior. If Lacy is more considered by the present age, in the circle where he moves; Laudohn will probably fill a much higher place in the volume of fame, in distant times, and among foreign nations, when the little malignities, prejudices, and partialities of the hour are buried in oblivion. But it is time that I close this letter.

LETTER XIII.

Preparations for War.—Arrival of Troops.—Croats.—Empress Queen's Repugnance to Hostilities.—Advantages possessed by Prussia.—Efforts of the Archduchess Christina to prevent a Rupture.—Proposition of dismantling Vienna.—The Imperial Palace.

VIENNA, March 19th, 1778.

THE die seems at length to be thrown, and war is about to begin as soon as the season will permit. This city, which less than four months ago, when I arrived here, presented a picture of general tranquillity, is now transformed into an Arsenal. The streets, as well as the public places, are crowded with cannon, ammunition, baggage, and all the apparatus of an approaching campaign. Every day, new regiments arrive; who, after having been reviewed, continue their march towards Bohemia or Moravia.

Nothing

Nothing can convey a more striking idea of the greatness of the House of Austria, the magnitude of its resources, the extent of its dominion, and the number of provinces subject to Maria Theresa, than the scene to which I am daily a witness. From the shore of the Adriatic, and from the foot of the Appennine, to the frontiers of Moldavia and Walachia, troops are constantly pouring in to maintain her quarrel. Albanians, Croats, Hungarians, and Italians, successively arrive under the walls of Vienna. So many different nations, united in one cause, remind me of the fabulous ages of the Earth, when all Greece, or the lesser Asia, flocked to a common standard, and fought under the same leader.

It is in the irregular forces which Maria Theresa can bring into the field, that she possesses a great superiority over her adversary. The Croats and Hungarians, fierce, undisciplined, and subjected to scarcely any military laws, are attached to the House of Austria by prejudices and predilections of

of religion, manners, and education, peculiar to themselves. Frederic has no troops of a similar description to oppose to them, equally faithful and loyal. The Croat rarely or never deserts: he is even incapacitated by his ignorance of German, from mixing intimately with the soldiers of that nation. A degree of primeval rudeness and simplicity characterizes them, totally unlike the spirit which animates the mercenary stipendiary of modern armies. Fathers of families, followed by their sons, at the command of their Sovereign, cheerfully quit their habitations on the distant banks of the Drave, the Teifs, and the Lower Danube, to spill their blood in her cause. Hitherto the Croats have never been considered as regular troops; but, it is now intended to clothe and discipline them like the other regiments in the Austrian service. It is a sight equally novel and pleasing, to see these corps arrive, dressed in the rude garb of their respective provinces, and presenting in their whole

appearance, a contrast to the soldier of every other European service. From the great magazines in the neighbourhood of this city, they are furnished with arms, accoutrements, and all other requisites, before they prosecute their march towards the frontiers.

Maria Theresa derives nevertheless, little gratification or pleasure from these exhibitions of her power, and testimonies of affection to her person. It is no longer a secret that she deprecates a rupture, and is reluctantly dragged forward by her son. From the moment that intelligence arrived of the Elector of Bavaria's death, she foresaw with regret its probable consequences. Having passed the active period of life, and only desirous of repose, she is not to be roused by objects of ambition, or impelled by a recollection of past injuries sustained from Prussia. Those who have access to her, witness the dejection of her spirits, and the agitation of her mind on the arrival of every courier: they see her
eyes

eyes perpetually red with weeping, or suffused in tears. Instead of demonstrating her satisfaction at the promptitude, with which her orders for putting the Austrian forces in motion, have been obeyed; she averts her eyes from every display of her military strength. Only a few days ago, when one of the finest regiments in the service arrived from Mantua, on the Esplanade, under the walls of Vienna, no entreaties could induce her to look upon them, from the apartments of the palace. She runs with eagerness to close the shutters, whenever troops pass under her windows. Anxious to prevent so great a calamity as war, she passes half her time in prayer; and yesterday she remained for three hours on her knees, in the Cathedral, invoking the Divine blessing to aid her efforts for maintaining the peace of Germany. Prince Kaunitz is gloomy, thoughtful, and less communicative in society. His situation, which is a singular one, demands consummate address, in order, while he preserves

preserves the affection of the mother, not to irritate, or alienate the son. During his long administration, he has not, probably, found himself in so painful, or so delicate a predicament. The Emperor alone appears unaffectedly gay, constantly in action, on horseback before the sun is risen, and ready to receive with alacrity the various bodies of troops on their arrival.

Whatever may be the final event of the war which impends, two great advantages attend Prussia at its commencement. The first results from the justice of the cause in which Frederic is engaged: for, even here in Vienna, the claims of the House of Austria are by no means considered as incontestable. In addition to so important a circumstance, which is neither to be despised nor forgotten, we should recollect the alliance and co-operation of Saxony. That fertile and powerful Electorate, covering the whole frontier of Brandenburg, is already in Frederic's possession, and must be protected by his arms. If it is the

cause of the German Empire in general, it is the cause of Saxony in a special manner, for which he is about to shake off the infirmities of age, and to appear again in the field. Supported by the Saxons, while he is supplied from Misnia and Lusatia with provisions, he can commence offensive operations, and render Bohemia the immediate theatre of war. His intimate knowledge of that country, where he has made so many campaigns, must necessarily give him a vast superiority, and perhaps enable him to wrest the northern provinces from Maria Theresa.

Besides the other motives which impel the Empress Queen to deplore hostilities, is the peculiar position of her daughter, the Archduchess Christina. That Princess, who is tenderly beloved by Maria Theresa, was married near twelve years ago to Prince Albert of Saxony, son to the late King of Poland, and uncle of the reigning Elector. He has ever since resided principally in the Court of Vienna, and he has apartments in

in the Imperial palace. Having been constituted Governor of Hungary, he and the Archduchess occupy the castle of Presburg; but they are now here on a visit to the Empress, over whom her daughter possesses a great ascendant. She is warmly attached to her husband; who, on his part, from interest, as well as from a sense of honor and gratitude, feels himself not less bound to espouse the Austrian cause, and to shed, if necessary, his blood in the present quarrel. As it is supposed that he will command one of the armies destined to act against the common enemy; in the discharge of that duty, it may be his lot to enter Dresden, and to desolate the dominions of the family from which he springs. Such a conflict of principles and obligations, cannot fail to be deeply painful to a mind of sensibility. The Archduchess, his wife, is known to be affected by it in the liveliest manner. She deprecates the prospect of a rupture, which must involve her husband in unspeakable embarrassments; and she has

more than once thrown herself at her mother's feet, conjuring her with tears, while it is still time, to recede from her pretensions on the Bavarian succession, and to stop the effusion of human blood. The Emperor can neither be unacquainted with this fact, as may naturally be presumed; nor is he ignorant of the Archduchess's influence over the Empress. It is possible that he may one day resent, and even punish her opposition to his favorite measures.

The Carnival is now at an end; and Lent, which is here observed with extraordinary rigor, in compliance with the Empress's devotion, leaves me more at leisure to visit the principal objects of curiosity in Vienna. This capital conveys no mean idea of the grandeur of the Austrian line, in whom are united so many kingdoms and provinces. Those which have been dismembered from it in our own time, within the last fifty years, would form of themselves a potent Monarchy. Naples,
Sicily,

Sicily, Sardinia, Servia, Bosnia, and Silesia, all belonged to the late Emperor, Charles the Sixth, at different periods of his reign. Marshal Colloredo told me, a few days ago, that he had been in garrison at Belgrade, at Messina, and at Breslaw, when each of those places formed a part of the Austrian dominions. Vienna is not only populous, but the streets are crowded with people of various nations. In my walks, I constantly meet with Hungarians, Greeks, Turks, and Poles, all habited in the peculiar dress of their respective countries. Nothing is more picturesque and amusing than such a diversity, which rarely occurs in London, or in Paris.

It is not, however, the city of Vienna, strictly so denominated, which displays either the extent or the magnificence of a capital, suitable to the Chief of the German Empire, the Sovereign of so vast a tract of Europe. The necessity, whether real or imaginary, of fortifying Vienna, contracts it to a very narrow compass; indeed, to so

small a space, that I have walked completely round the ramparts, at a quick pace, within fifty minutes. But, the suburbs, which invest it like a belt, and which are only separated from it by the Esplanade, are far superior in magnitude, as well as in beauty and elegance, to the city itself. There the great nobility principally reside in summer, when not absent on their estates, or not serving in the field. Probably, the next century will see Vienna dismantled, and rendered, like Peterburgh or Berlin, an open place. I have heard the question frequently agitated during my stay here, whether it might not be made so at this time, without danger. The Turks are no longer terrible, as they were in the sixteenth century; and the siege of 1683, when Leopold fled to Passau, will not be speedily renewed in our time. Against the King of Prussia, the most formidable adversary of the House of Austria, the Danube alone forms almost a sufficient protection, if guarded by the Imperial forces entrenched behind

behind the river. But, Maria Theresa has not yet forgotten that in 1741, the French and Bavarians advanced to St. Polten, scarcely four leagues distant; and that in 1758, when Frederic besieged Olmutz, terror and consternation pervaded Vienna. The recollection of these disastrous scenes is too deeply impressed on her memory, ever to be erased; and as often as the subject of dismantling Vienna has been mentioned to her, she exclaims, "I have already twice
" seen this city a frontier garrison, exposed
" to hourly attack: I will not unnecessarily expose myself to similar or greater
" misfortunes in my old age." It is however, more than possible, that Joseph, whenever he succeeds his mother, may adopt an opposite line of policy and conduct.

The palace of the "Favorita," so frequently mentioned by Lady Wortley Montague, in which Charles the Sixth expired, is now converted by his daughter, into a seminary of education. Never was any residence less princely, or even commodious. Resembling rather a Nunnery, than the ha-

bitation of a Sovereign, it stands in one of the streets of a dusty suburb, without the smallest court or area in front, and commanding no prospect whatever. The "Belvidere," which belonged to the great Prince Eugene, and which was purchased by Maria Theresa, from his only daughter and heiress, the Princess of Saxe Hilburghausen, is far more splendid. Constructed on a fine eminence, at the extremity of the Carinthian suburb, it enjoys an extensive view, terminated to the south by the lofty mountains of Styria. Magnificent as it is, none of the Imperial Family ever inhabit it; and the Emperor has, therefore, converted it into a repository for paintings. Some of the houses of the great nobility far exceed in beauty, as well as in elegance and grandeur, either the "Favorita," or the "Belvidere."

The Imperial palace itself, which is situate within the walls of Vienna, where both the Empress Queen, the Emperor, and so many other members of their Family are lodged, conveys scarcely any idea of the Majesty of the modern Cæsars, the successors
of

of Charlemagne, and the pretended representatives of Augustus. A vast, confused mass of building, without symmetry, plan, or architecture, it consists of several courts communicating with each other, erected in different ages, and occupying a prodigious space; but destitute of any, even the smallest garden. The apartments which her Imperial Majesty inhabits, are indeed pleasant, because they have a southern aspect, and in winter may be said to form a comfortable, if not a princely residence: but, before the end of May, the heat commonly renders them insupportable. Within the circuit of the palace, are not only comprised various houses, appropriated to some of the great Officers of State and Ministers, who are lodged at the expence of the Sovereign; it includes besides, in its immense circumference, a superb Manege; the German play-house; the royal library; the cabinet of natural history; the jewel-office, where are preserved the Imperial and Bohemian Crowns; no less than three chapels, in one of which the Empress usually hears mass every

every day; and the "Jeu de Paume," or Racket Court. The Emperor plays frequently at this game, in which he is tolerably expert. I saw him yesterday, in a grey jacket, and thick worsted stockings, engaged at it for a considerable time, with his brother-in-law the Duke of Saxe Teschen, and two noblemen who made the party. The exercise is violent, and might prove peculiarly fatal to the Emperor, who has an aneurism in his leg. When he is heated, the pulsation of the artery is so strong, that it may be perceptibly felt with the finger, through the thickest stocking. It is curious to reflect that the destiny of Germany and of Europe might be materially changed in an instant, by the bursting of a blood-vessel, the coat of which cannot exceed the thickness of a wafer.

Early in the course of next month, I may probably visit Hungary; but I shall write again, before I quit this capital.

LETTER XIV.

Anecdotes of Metastasio.—State of Public Affairs.

—Departure of the Emperor, to join the Army in Bohemia.

VIENNA, April 9th, 1778.

INSTEAD of wearying you with details of the military preparations, which here occupy the attention and conversation of every society; let me, before I set out for Buda, gratify your curiosity on another subject. You ask, whether I have seen Metastasio, and you desire to hear some particulars relative to so illustrious a person. He is so little seen in Vienna, that a stranger, unless introduced to him at his own house, may pass many months, I had almost said years, without often meeting him. I have been twice in company with him at Prince Colloredo's, where he is commonly found on great festivals: but, neither his inclination, his state of health, nor his period of life,

life, allow him to mix much in crowds. To Prince Kaunitz's he never comes; for they are not on terms of amity. Whether the misunderstanding has originated with the Minister, or may be attributed to the poet, is a point much contested; and on which I am unable to give a decided opinion.

If however, he does not enjoy the friendship of the Minister, he has, for near fifty years, been constantly honored with the smiles of the Sovereign. The invitation of Charles the Sixth induced him to quit Rome for Vienna, and the patronage of that Monarch fixed him here for life. Though he has exchanged the banks of the Tyber, and the classic air of Italy, for the ungenial climate of the frozen Danube; his fancy does not appear to have suffered either in delicacy, or in luxuriance, from the transplantation. Yet the late Emperor, while he rewarded Metastasio with munificence, and loaded him with caresses, did not scruple to fetter the powers of the poet, by imposing on him laws scarcely compatible with

with the enthusiasm of genius. Metastasio, in composing his finest pieces, was always obliged to accommodate the opera to the length of time which the Emperor indicated or commanded. Endowed with more than ordinary sensibility, it may naturally be supposed that he could not resist the effect of beauty. The Countess d'Alheim, one of the most charming women of the Court of Vienna, was the object of his passion. She had been previously beloved by Charles the Sixth himself, who was supposed to have been admitted by her to the usual privileges of royal lovers; nor was it till after the decease of his Imperial rival, that Metastasio ventured to divulge his flame. Even then, as if conscious of his temerity, he drew across it the mysterious veil of poetry and fiction. He has celebrated the Countess d'Alheim under an imaginary name, in various of his compositions. Whether she returned his affection, is doubtful; but Metestasio's attachment, like Petrarch's for Laura, or Tasso's for Leonora

Leonora d'Esté, never exceeded the limits of respectful homage, and demanded no improper sacrifices.

This celebrated person, who is now near eighty years of age, though he enjoys uncommon health, begins to bend under the pressure of time. Those who know him intimately, assure me that he is exceedingly broken and altered within the last five years. In his person he is short and thick, but not corpulent. His countenance is expressive; his nose disproportionately large, and his complexion pale or rather fallow, like an Italian. He always wears the dress of an Abbé, and nothing can be so methodical as his manner of life. Metastasio rises betimes, goes out every day at a quarter before twelve to hear mass, returns home, and dines punctually at two. For near, or quite thirty years past, he has never dined out any where. In the evening he repairs constantly, when his health permits, to the house of Mademoiselle Figarolle. She is a woman of quality, has a very cultivated mind,

mind, and though no longer young, she has not ceased to be agreeable in Metastasio's opinion, whose attachment to her is of antient date. Precisely at ten he leaves her, and retires to rest.

Baron Hagen, President of the Aulic Council, divides with Mademoiselle Figgelle, his friendship and his leisure. They pass much of their time together, occupied in literary pursuits, peculiarly in the perusal of the great writers of antiquity. Metastasio speaks French, and converses in that language with facility; but, like every Italian, he prefers his native tongue. He is well lodged, on a third floor, in the "Cole Marck," and the apartments which he occupies, are given him by the Crown. Maria Theresa, emulous of her father, during the course of her long reign, has distinguished him by every possible mark of favor and consideration. He receives from her bounty at this time, an annual pension of six thousand florins, or near five hundred pounds sterling; and if we except

Voltaire, I believe he is, without dispute, the wealthiest poet now existing in Europe. From his infancy he seems to have been not less favored by Fortune, than enriched by Nature. No person here with whom I have conversed, ventures to assert positively the name of his parents; and even the precise place of his birth is hardly less contested than that of Homer. He was born either in Tuscany, or in the Papal territories; but, of an origin very inferior and obscure. When a boy, like Pope, "he lisped in numbers;" composed verses without effort or almost premeditation, and recited them in the streets of Rome, to which city he had been carried in his childhood. It was there that his uncommon powers excited the wonder and attention of Gravina, one of the most eminent legal practitioners of Italy, in the beginning of the present century. Such was their effect on him, that he took the boy home, educated him; and finding his capacity expand with his years, Gravina adopted him, and made him heir to his

little

little fortune. Even his real name is totally unknown, or at least very problematical. The denomination which he bears, and which he has rendered so celebrated, was given him by Gravina, either to conceal his original name, or as a substitute; Metastasio being a word of Greek derivation, and evidently factitious. Charles the Sixth, by inviting him to Vienna, and amply rewarding his talents, placed him above dependance. The present Empress has rendered him wealthy. He now passes the evening of life, in the midst of the most delicious repose, surrounded by every comfort, easy in his circumstances, and secure of immortality as long as poetry and genius are admired among men.

This morning, the Duke of Saxe Teschen set out for Olmutz, accompanied by the Archduchess his wife, who quitted him at the distance of some leagues, to return to this city: a separation which did not take place, without violent emotions on her part. It is understood that he is to com-

mand the army of Moravia, aided by Marshal Haddick: an appointment probably chosen, as removing him to a distance from Saxony. All the preparations and indications of a speedy rupture, continue. Laudohn, who at length has been created a Field-Marshal, is already arrived in Bohemia, where the storm is expected to burst. Yet, negotiations still subsist, and couriers come almost daily from Dresden or Berlin, which keep alive the hope of peace. The Emperor's departure is however supposed to be imminent, after which every rational prospect of an accommodation must be at an end. We know that the Archduke Maximilian and Marshal Lacy are to accompany him. My next letter will be written from some part of Hungary.

POSTSCRIPT.

April 12th.

The Emperor went yesterday to join the army. He and his brother Maximilian rose at four o'clock in the morning; and

as

as soon as it was light, they walked for some time on the ramparts, waiting for the Empress Queen, in order to take leave of her. When she was ready, they repaired to her apartment, and proceeded together to the chapel in the palace. There, on their knees, they passed above an hour in prayer, invoking the Divine assistance on the Austrian arms. Maria Theresa was extremely agitated during the whole service; but, when at the conclusion, she prepared to bid her sons adieu, her grief became too strong for her frame. She held the Emperor long in her arms, sobbed, and, at separating from him, nearly fainted. Joseph tore himself from his mother's embraces, carrying with him her parting benediction. Marshal Lacy is gone with them, and they took the road to Olmutz, whence they repair to Prague. I am setting out for Esterhazy in Hungary.

LETTER XV.

*Buda.—Flagellants.—State of Hungary.—Turkish
Edifices at Buda.—Public Baths.*

BUDA, April 19th, 1778.

I LEFT Vienna a few hours after I had concluded my last letter, and have been already three days in this city. The contrast between the Hungarian and the Austrian capital, is one of the most striking to be conceived. Never were two nations more dissimilar in manners, dress, and appearance, than the German and the Hungarian. Even the superstition of Vienna, is far outdone by that of Buda. The first object which I saw from my windows, on the morning after my arrival, were flagellants, marching slowly through the streets, covered with blood, and dragging along crosses of a vast weight, followed by crowds

of people. It was Good Friday, and the whole city seemed to be animated by the same spirit of penitential and gloomy devotion. I could have fancied myself at Madrid, half a century ago. The flagellants wore hoods or sacks over their faces, in order to conceal them; but their backs, which were entirely naked, bore the sanguinary marks of the scourge at every step. I am assured that the persons who inflict on themselves this voluntary punishment, are frequently men of rank, and that the practice is by no means confined to the inferior orders.

It is not my intention to enter on the particulars of my journey through Hungary. I stopped for a few hours at Râab, a city memorable for being the termination of the Ottoman conquests towards Germany. Sultan Amurath the Third made himself master of it, towards the close of the sixteenth century; a period when the House of Austria, under the feeble government of Rodolph the Second, was sunk into the

most deplorable state of political annihilation. Much of the road to Buda lies near the bank of the Danube, which is of very considerable magnitude. It is striking to behold so noble a river flowing majestically in silence, through one of the richest countries in Europe; but almost destitute of commerce, navigation, or population. From Rääb to this city, a tract of near a hundred miles, I saw scarcely a single boat of any kind upon the stream. All is solitary and inanimate; unlike the scenery of the Rhine or the Loire, where, at every curve of the river, villages, castles, and habitations present themselves to the eye. It is not in the tyranny or incapacity of the present government, that we must seek for the principal cause of this desolation. Hungary, till the accession of the late Emperor Charles the Sixth, was, for more than two centuries, the most unfortunate kingdom of Europe. The provinces of the new world were not more cruelly plundered or ravaged by the Spanish conquerors,

querors, than Hungary was desolated by the Turkish Sultans. Solyman the Magnificent and his successors, repeatedly carried off the greater part of the inhabitants into slavery, without distinction of age, rank, or sex. Completely masters of the kingdom, if we except the royal title and ornaments, scarcely any thing else remained to the House of Austria. It is only ninety-two years since the expulsion of the Turks from the city where I am now writing; Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorraine, at the head of the Imperial forces, having entered it at the Breach, in 1686, after a long and desperate resistance. To the Ottoman devastations, succeeded the oppressive tyranny of Leopold and Joseph the First. Perpetual insurrections, and attempts at emancipation, were repressed with all the severity of arbitrary power. The scaffold of Eperies, a town of Upper Hungary, continued for many months to exhibit a scene of blood the most revolting to human nature, and which has no parallel in modern

dern history. A great length of time, and a wise administration, sustained by the judicious encouragement of industry, arts, and manufactures, can alone, by their united operation, restore Hungary to its just rank in the scale of nations.

Buda presents at this time many curious monuments of the Mahometan taste, as well as superstition. In the lower town, on the very edge of the Danube, stands a mosque, with its minaret, in perfect preservation, which is now converted into a manufactory of salt-petre. Though defaced by time and neglect, it conveys no unfavorable idea of Turkish architecture. Its figure is an octagon, and it constituted the principal religious edifice of the city, while Buda was under the Ottoman yoke. But the hot baths, from which I am just returned, are a still more amusing object of inspection. It was impossible not to recollect, while considering them, the description given by Lady Wortley Montague, of the baths of Sophia. Men, women, and children

children were bathing promiscuously, or lying round the basin, stretched in a variety of attitudes. The females, though not altogether naked, were nearly so, and the greater part excited no sentiment except disgust. I saw, nevertheless, among them, one or two tolerably pretty figures, occupied in combing each other's hair.

The Turks, while in possession of Buda, seem to have paid particular attention to the construction and preservation of the public baths. They are large, and still form a principal recreation of the inhabitants, who pass many hours almost every day, either in bathing, or on the sides of the basin. The heat is, nevertheless, so great, occasioned by the vapor which arises from the water, that it is scarcely supportable beyond a few minutes. Every part of the building is composed of stone, the vaulted roof being perforated with holes, in order to admit the light. The water, which pours continually into the basin, through two or more channels, is strongly impregnated with

with mineral qualities. Though the price paid for bathing by the common people, which is only about a halfpenny, cannot exclude even the lowest vulgar, yet no dissolution of manners is found to arise from such a promiscuous concourse of both sexes, in a state approaching to nudity. The baths in the Rascian or Slavonian suburb, are still hotter than those in the Hungarian town. Both merit peculiar attention, as being, I believe, the only edifices of the kind that exist in Europe, which have been constructed by the Turks, beyond the limits of the Ottoman dominions.

Every country has had its periods of comparative felicity, glory, and tranquillity. The golden age of Hungary, was unquestionably the reign of Matthias Corvinus, in the fifteenth century; when Buda, one of the most polished and civilized capitals in the world, the seat of arts and letters, looked down with contempt upon Vienna. The Emperor Frederic the Third, driven from that city, and reduced to wander ignominiously

miniously over Germany, beheld his Palace occupied by Matthias Corvinus; who little imagined that the House of Austria, from such a state of depression, would so soon emerge into power and prosperity. But, with their independence, the Hungarians lost their political pre-eminence; and Buda, like Prague, abandoned by its Princes, successively sunk into the deserted capital of a Turkish or an Austrian province. The Archduchess Christina and her husband, rarely or never visit it: when not at Vienna, they reside at Presburg, where the insignia of the crown are always preserved. Yet, the superb situation of Buda, in the center of the kingdom, and the local beauties, as well as advantages of its position, might well challenge the preference. To-morrow I shall continue my journey towards Schemnitz.

LETTER XVI.

*Journey from Buda.—Mines at Schemnitz.—
Mines of Cremnitz.—Presburg.—The Castle.—
State of Affairs at Vienna.*

VIENNA, May 16th, 1778.

IT is full seventy miles north from Buda to the mines of Schemnitz, through a wild, mountainous, and in many parts an almost uninhabited country. The peasants, male and female, partake of the rudeness of the soil, and appear to be in a state of penury, or rather of misery. Few of the women had any covering below the knee, except boots; while the men were wrapt in black sheep skins, with the wool outward. Even the postillions who drove us, had no other covering; and their long moustachios, added to their fur bonnets, gave them the appearance of Tartars, more than of Europeans. The town of Schemnitz, where I passed three days, in order to visit the mines, stands

stands in a valley surrounded on all sides by lofty hills. It may be said to impend over a hollow abyss, the ground on which it is built, being every where excavated or undermined. Even in the midst of the principal market place, there are shafts or openings, by which one may immediately descend many hundred fathoms into the earth.

Having put on a miner's dress and bonnet, preparations which are indispensable, on account of the water that every where drips through the fissures of the mines; I entered them by means of ladders that conduct from one subterranean gallery to another, through passages so narrow as scarcely to admit a single person at a time. Four little boys attended, holding lamps. In proportion as we descended lower into the earth, the heat perceptibly increased, 'till it became, in some places, almost too close or suffocating for respiration. Though it was scarcely eight o'clock in the morning when we entered the mine,

we

we did not arrive before eleven, at “ the
“ gallery of the Emperor Francis ;” so called
from its having been constructed under that
Prince’s reign. Here I found myself full
fifteen hundred feet under the opening of
the highest shaft. This stupendous cata-
comb or gallery, which extends in length
near sixty thousand feet, or more than
seven English miles, has cost immense sums
to make, as well as to repair and maintain ;
the incumbent earth being every where
supported by beams of wood, frequently
double and triple. Some hundred thousand
florins are annually expended for the pur-
pose. Below the Emperor Francis’s gallery,
there are two other stories, the deepest of
which is three hundred feet beneath ; but,
as they contained no particular object of
curiosity, we declined visiting them. In
no part does the interior of the mine open
into caverns or chambers of considerable
size ; the largest which I saw, being scarcely
capable of containing forty persons : a
point of view in which they are very in-
ferior

ferior as objects of admiration, to the mines of Danmora in Sweden.

Though gold, silver, copper, and lead, are all found in the mines of Schemnitz, the last forms the predominant metal. Their original discovery is almost lost in the barbarism and obscurity of the middle ages; but, it is indisputable that they have been worked for eleven hundred years. At this time they find employment for near twenty-six thousand men, women, and children, in the different departments or processes. An admirable police is maintained; no criminal or malefactor being ever sent there, and no female permitted even to enter the mines. Unlike those of Sweden, Carniola, and many others in various parts of Europe, which are a sort of subterranean colonies, the workmen at Schemnitz never sleep below. After six, eight, or twelve hours of labour, they remount, and are relieved by others. The Turks, who were so long sovereigns and masters of the far greater part of Hungary, never

never took possession of Schemnitz, though they penetrated to a village only two miles distant. Content with exacting an annual tribute of some thousand florins, they indolently abandoned the mines to the Austrian Princes.

Nothing can be so precarious, fluctuating, and incapable of calculation, as the annual profits derived from them to the Crown; because, at moments when the veins of ore are most abundant, they suddenly disappear, and frequently deceive or disappoint the guess of the most experienced miners. About twenty-three years ago, just before the great war of 1756, they yielded so little, that it became a question, when all the expences attending them were defrayed, whether the Empress Queen was a gainer or a loser. But, precisely at that time, when she stood most in need of pecuniary aid, the workmen discovered veins so rich and productive, that during some years the gains were prodigious, amounting annually to several millions of florins. They have
since

since been gradually diminishing, though by no means to so reduced a degree as in 1756. At present they continue to be highly profitable; and besides employing such numbers of people, bring in a considerable revenue to Maria Theresa. The Baron de Seeberg, a Transylvanian gentleman, who is one of the Intendants, accompanied us through the mines, and furnished me with the most satisfactory information respecting them.

Directing my course to Cremnitz, which is near twenty miles north, and at no very considerable distance from the foot of the Carpathian mountains, that divide Hungary and Poland, I arrived there in a few hours. The mines of Cremnitz produce only gold and silver exclusively; neither iron, lead, nor copper, being found in them. They fall far short of Schemnitz in magnitude, as well as in value and importance; only about eighteen hundred persons being constantly occupied in the various departments; and of seven mines which are worked at this time, two

alone produce any considerable profit. I was let down into the mine of St. Matthias, one of the deepest, situate about a mile from the town. Having been placed on a sort of leathern seat, fastened to an iron chain, in twelve minutes I found myself at the bottom; during which time I had descended eight hundred and seventy-five English feet. I was afterwards drawn up in the same manner. The sensation is rather pleasing than disagreeable, as the consciousness of being thus suspended over a dark abyss, is accompanied with a conviction of the absence of all real danger. I traversed a considerable part of the mine, sometimes walking, at others crawling on my hands and knees, or descending from gallery to gallery, by means of ladders. The heat was more oppressive than at Schemnitz; but the passages were dry, whereas in the former, water oozed or poured down in almost every part of the mine. Here I had an opportunity of seeing the two species of gold ore, the pale and the red, which lay scattered

scattered in heaps. The produce is however, if possible, still more precarious than at Schemnitz. Two years ago, after every expence defrayed, they yielded about eighteen thousand pounds sterling; last year, only seven thousand entered the Imperial treasury, free of deductions. No certain calculations can be made on that head.

It is near a hundred and twenty miles from Cremnitz to Presburg, through a very beautiful and romantic, as well as populous part of Hungary. Inferior to Buda in population and extent, Presburg is more compact, and the buildings are more modern. On a very steep hill, at the extremity of the city, overhanging the Danube, is built the Castle, which forms the ordinary residence of the Duke of Saxe Teschen, Governor of the kingdom. The apartments command an extensive view over the vast plains of Hungary and Austria: even Vienna may be descried, at the distance of near five and twenty miles. Below flows the river, divided into several channels,

and enclosing a number of small islands, covered with wood.

In one of the turrets of the Castle, are kept the Crown and royal ornaments. So jealous are the Hungarians of their preservation, that they cannot be seen by any person, unless upon a written order from the Empress Queen herself. Even then, a deputation of the nobility and clergy must attend, for the express purpose. No European nation has manifested a more tenacious and inflexible spirit of independence, than the Hungarian. None has made more desperate, though often ineffectual efforts, to maintain their political freedom. This remark must nevertheless be understood of the nobility only; for the people at large are equally strangers to the theory, and to the practical benefits of liberty. It is by concession, not only to the rights of the nobles, but to their prejudices and national customs, that Maria Theresa, during more than seven and thirty years, has maintained her influence over them. In the Hungarians, when driven
from

from Vienna at the commencement of her reign, she found the surest and best support of her tottering crowns. I could not survey the great hall of the Castle of Presburg, without recollecting that it was the scene where the Nobles unanimously drew their sabres, exclaiming, "Our lives and our blood for your Majesty!" Neither ancient nor modern History presents any event more affecting, or productive of more important consequences.

In my way to Vienna, about three leagues from Presburg, I viewed the remains of the Roman colony of Carnuntum, constructed on the southern bank of the Danube, in order to repress the inroads of the Quadi and Marcomanni. Mounds of earth, and one very decayed gateway of Roman workmanship, mark the spot. I passed over the ground upon which stood the camp of Cara Mustapha in 1683, when he besieged Vienna. It covered more than two leagues in extent, and tradition points out the precise place where the Vizier's tent

was erected. His ignorance, temerity, and avarice, saved the Austrian capital, by allowing John Sobieski time to come to its relief.

The political aspect of affairs is not materially changed since my departure from this city ; and war still impends, though it is not actually begun. The great Austrian army is assembled in Bohemia ; and the Emperor, who remains at Prague, is occupied in accelerating its motions. Frederic is in Silesia, at the head of his forces, accompanied by his two nephews, the Prince Royal, and the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic. The Elector Palatine continues to preserve a pacific and inglorious neutrality, while Saxony is armed and zealous in the Prussian cause. It is pretended that negotiations are again opened between Joseph and the King, for adjusting the points in contest. But, if such be the fact, we are here in total ignorance of their nature, progress, or probable result. The Empress Queen is already gone to the palace of Schon-

Schönbrun, where she may indulge her emotions, undisturbed. Vienna itself has lost much of its gaiety, from the absence of so many officers employed on service. In a few days I shall probably set out for Poland; all means of passing through Bohemia being suspended by the circumstances of the present crisis.

LETTER XVII.

*Journey to Cracow.—Aspect of that City.—
Palaces.—Ruinous Condition of Cracow.—
Polish Dress.—Marriage Festivities.—State of
Poland.—Enterprize of Choisy, and his Defence
of the Castle of Cracow.—Mines of Vielicza.*

CRACOW, June 3d, 1778.

AFTER a stay of near six months at Vienna, I left it on the 24th of May, and reached Olmutz the following evening. That city, the capital of Moravia, presented an interesting and animated scene, full of troops, and prepared against invasion. Every precaution has been taken for its security, in case of an attack. All the convents are converted into magazines or barracks; the university is removed to Brinn, and the ordinary garrison is considerably augmented. I walked round the place, as it is not permitted to mount the ramparts; and I am not surprized at the long resistance

ance which it made, or at the final repulse that Frederic experienced before it, when he besieged Olmutz in 1758, just twenty years ago. The river Morau, as well as several other streams that unite near the walls, form a continued morass round the town, which renders all regular advances difficult, slow, and hazardous. Prince Albert of Saxony and Marshal Haddick, who have under their command a numerous army, will probably protect it against any similar attempt during the present summer.

Continuing my journey through Austrian Silesia, I arrived at Teschen, a miserable town; whence I had only eight leagues to Billitz, which, previous to the late partition of Poland, formed the limit of the Empress Queen's dominions. The country, rich, fertile, and populous, formed a striking contrast to the towns, in which every species of poverty and wretchedness seemed to reside. I crossed, beyond Teschen, the river Vistula, there a shallow torrent, scarcely twelve miles from its source in the Carpathian

thian mountains; and after being detained for several hours at Billitz, I entered the Imperial Poland. Before the partition of 1772, the Palatinate of Cracow extended to the frontier of Austrian Silesia; but, since that memorable event, Maria Theresa's dominions are pushed to the edge of the Vistula, and to the suburbs of Cracow itself. I had flattered myself with reaching that city, the evening of the same day on which I left Billitz, the distance between the two places being only sixty-six miles; but, about two leagues from Cracow, the horses having tired, we were obliged to pass the night in a wood. A peasant, after some hours, relieved us from our embarrassment, and I arrived early next morning, the 30th of May, on the bank of the Vistula, opposite to Cracow. Crossing the river over a loose floating raft, as it might more properly be termed than a bridge; after a fatiguing journey from Olmutz, I gladly found myself in a tolerable house, kept by a Frenchman, on the great square of the

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the antient capital of this dismembered kingdom.

Cracow cannot be visited by a stranger, without exciting, at every step, emotions of mingled compassion and indignation: pity, on contemplating the fallen state of a city once flourishing, populous, and celebrated; now ruinous and deserted: indignation, when we reflect on the abject state to which a country is reduced, where public spirit is extinct, the Crown degraded, the Nobility enslaved, or driven to wander in exile, and its fairest provinces divided among foreign Powers. On entering Cracow, every object presented the image of desolation. Houses, uninhabited and tumbling into ruin, as if recently sacked or abandoned by an enemy, struck me on all sides. Even in the most frequented streets, many of the finest buildings are falling to decay. The Castle, which once constituted the royal residence of the Polish Kings, built on an eminence at the southern extremity of the city, partakes of the general destruction.

struction. In the apartments, which now begin to admit the inclemencies of the weather, are still to be seen the devices and cyphers of the Sovereigns of the family of "Vasa," who governed Poland for more than eighty years, during the last and the preceding century. The walls, as well as rooms, bear melancholy testimony to the actual calamities of the country. They are full of the marks of shot and cannon balls, discharged against the Castle, when Cracow was besieged by the Russians, only ten years ago. General Apraxin, after a desperate resistance, entered it by storm in August 1768, putting to the sword all who opposed him. From the hill on which it stands, the view is beautiful, commanding the city, the course of the Vistula, and the country to a great distance, bounded towards Hungary by the Carpathian mountains, whose summits are white with snow, or lost in the clouds.

Within the walls of the Castle, close to that part of it which may be denominated
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the Palace, stands the cathedral, where repose the bodies of the various Kings, from Sigismund the First, of the line of Jagellon, in the sixteenth century, down to Augustus the Second of Saxony inclusively, who died in 1733. John Sobieski is among the number; but, to my astonishment, he has no monument erected to his memory. About a mile out of Cracow, to the north, is likewise another palace, which, though now in a state of total dilapidation, bears the marks of former splendor. In the gardens, which are converted to purposes of husbandry, and covered with grain, a Tumulus, thrown up more than four hundred years ago, by Casimir the Great, King of Poland, attracted my attention. It is designed to commemorate the spot where his mistress is buried. She was a Jewess, named Esther; and such were her charms, as well as her ascendant over the King, that to them her countrymen are said to have been eminently indebted for the immunities civil and

and political, which to this day they enjoy in Poland.

National barbarism, no less than political humiliation, perpetually impress the mind, on surveying the aspect of the city from which I am writing. Till within the last two years, it was not wholly paved; and nothing can be so execrable as the present paving, which scarcely deserves the name. There is not a single lamp in the place. No precautions are used to cleanse the streets, which of course become infectious in summer, and almost impassable in winter. Spouts that project from every house, inundate the passenger whenever it rains. The bridge laid across the Vistula, is only a collection of planks, floating on the stream; over which a waggon scarcely ventures to pass. I visited the University yesterday. It is mean, ruinous, and destitute of every thing requisite for the education or instruction of youth. The arsenal is converted into a stable; and the population of Cracow has diminished with
its

its grandeur. On numbering the inhabitants a little time ago, they were found to fall short of ten thousand, among which are included a great proportion of beggars, or persons in the last stage of wretchedness. The town of Casimir, which is a sort of deserted suburb, still more miserable than the city to which it is joined, may contain likewise, it is supposed, about five thousand persons, principally Jews; no individual of that nation being permitted to reside in Cracow. If we estimate the whole number at fifteen thousand, we shall rather exceed, than fall short of the truth. Yet, this was the ancient metropolis, and is still the second city of Poland in size, population, and extent.

The Polish dress continues here to be much worn by persons of every rank, though it insensibly and annually becomes less universal. At Warsaw, I am assured that it is in a great measure supplanted by the German modes and manners. There
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is something martial, rude, and characteristic in the Polish habit, which by no means displeases. It breaks that tame and insipid uniformity of external appearance, which, in the course of the present century, has almost entirely supplanted the antient national distinctions of Europe. The Portuguese, the Russian, and the Neapolitan, are now no longer distinguishable from each other, and all the former originality of garb, which discriminated one nation from another, is lost. The Poles alone, who have survived their independence, have nevertheless tenaciously preserved their former habit, which hitherto the Russians have not attempted to compel them to renounce. A "Piaſt," or gentleman, thus clothed, presents a striking contrast to those of every other country. His head, which he shaves, is covered with a large fur bonnet. He wears a sort of hussar's dress, with long hanging sleeves, a sabre that reaches to the ground, and boots. His enormous Mouf-
tachios

tachios complete the fierce singularity of his figure, and remind us of his Sarmatian origin.

I was witness, two days ago, in a cottage not far from this city, to the revelry and festivity observed on the marriage of two Polish peasants. The bridegroom was a tall, handsome young man; and the intended bride, though not beautiful, might be termed very agreeable in her person. She wore a jacket laced with gold, which fitted exactly to her shape; and while it modestly concealed her neck, betrayed the formation of her figure. Her hair, parted on the crown of her head, was ornamented with a cap, composed of gold thread, and a garland of flowers. Behind, her hair, in great quantity, fell down her back, braided with rose-coloured ribands. When I came into the room, it was filled with peasants of both sexes, half intoxicated. The young bride supported herself against the wall, while her lover, quite unrestrained by the presence of so many spectators, paid

his court to her by every testimony of drunken and savage pleasure. He leaned against her, howling, whistling, singing, and hallooing by turns in her ear. From time to time, he presented her glasses of beer, which she never refused. But, when he attempted to take liberties with her person, she affected to oppose his caresses, and to repulse his freedom. At a little distance was seated the bride's mother, in a pleasing state of partial inebriation, regarding attentively the two lovers. Round them were several young men, who attended on the bridegroom; and six Polish girls in waiting on the bride. They were dressed exactly like her, having circlets of flowers about their heads, and several rows of coral round their necks. In the adjoining room, were a number of peasants, male and female, engaged in dancing. The men wear enormous boots with iron heels, which they strike continually against each other. It formed altogether a most entertaining exhibition of barbarous mirth.

Such

Such is the subjected condition of this city, that its internal protection and police are not entrusted to the Poles. Catharine the Second, who placed Stanislaus on the throne, not only maintains him in it, but extends her maternal care to every part of his remaining dominions. Her troops, to the number of about one hundred and fifty, are quartered in Cracow, and subsisted at the expence of the inhabitants. Nearly as many more, of whom a third part are Cossacks, dispersed in the surrounding villages, awe the country, and maintain the publick tranquillity. On the Southern bank of the Vistula, not a musket-shot distant from the suburbs, where the Austrian territories now commence, a guard of their soldiery is stationed. For, in consequence of the late partition of Poland, Cracow, which previously stood in the midst of the Palatinate of the same name, is become a frontier place, exposed to hourly insults, whenever circumstances may impel or induce Maria Theresa to cause her forces to advance fur-

ther into the kingdom. It is difficult to conceive a tenure more precarious than the one by which Stanislaus continues to hold the city, over which, in fact, his supremacy is merely nominal. In the suburb of Casimir, there are, it is true, between one and two hundred Polish troops, who are paid by and in the service of *the Republic*, not of *the Crown* of Poland. But, they cannot act, except in subserviency to the orders of the Russian Commander, who receives his instructions from Warsaw, and whose pleasure is paramount to all laws, or control of any kind.

During my stay here, I have had opportunities of enquiring every particular, relative to the celebrated enterprize of Charlot and Choisy, who, little more than six years ago, surprized the Castle of Cracow; and afterwards maintained it for several months, against the whole Russian force, stationed in this part of the kingdom. Few attempts of a similar kind have been more hardy, better concerted, or more successful. The
detail,

detail, which is not uninteresting, will convey an idea of the incapacity, as well as pusillanimity, that have distinguished the conduct of the confederate Poles, in all their attempts to shake off the Russian yoke, and to emancipate their country. During the intestine troubles and civil wars, which desolated this unfortunate kingdom for several years, since the election of his present Majesty to the Crown; he has owed his protection and preservation solely to the Muscovite troops of his powerful ally, Catharine the Second. They entered Cracow, at the Breach, in 1768; and more than fifteen hundred were stationed here as a regular garrison, in the commencement of the year 1772. At that time, an army of Poles, confederated under various leaders, in order to oppose the tyranny of the Court of Petersburg, having approached the place, encamped scarcely a league off, higher up on the Vistula. In the camp were many French Officers, who had either been sent to aid the Confederates by the

Duke de Choiseul, when first Minister of France; or who, in time of peace, had sought fortune and employment among the Poles.

Of the number was Monsieur de Choisy, a man whose intrepidity rendered him capable of conceiving and executing the boldest design. Having been apprized that the Russians, stationed in the Castle of Cracow, were negligent and careless in their guard, he found means to corrupt a Polish sutler, who lived in the fortress, and who supplied the garrison with provisions. Encouraged by a promise of reward, this man offered to assist the Confederates in surprizing the Castle, and even engaged to become their guide. He acquainted them, that there was only one entrance unguarded, by which they could effect their design; which was a common-sewer, or necessary, that emptied itself across the wall, on the outside of the hill. Through this channel, it was therefore determined to make the attempt; and on the
day

day agreed, the sutler facilitated its execution by giving an entertainment, in honor, as he pretended, of the anniversary of his daughter's birth. The Russian Lieutenant, who commanded in the fortrefs, was invited to the banquet; and after some hours of convivial festivity, was carried off from table, in a state of intoxication. The number of soldiers stationed within the Castle, did not exceed fifty, and many of them were in the same condition with their Commander.

Meanwhile the confederate army having approached the city, on the second of February 1772; Choisy, at the head of about three hundred followers, favored by the night, advanced along the bank of the Vistula, unperceived, quite under the Castle-walls. In Choisy's little band, there was a young man, called Charlot, a native of France, who having been reduced, on account of his irregularities, to the necessity of quitting his country, had joined the Polish insurgents. He was selected to conduct the

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party

party destined for the enterprize; a commission which he undertook with alacrity. Accompanied by about thirty volunteers, chiefly French or Germans, he mounted the hill, which is exceedingly steep at that place; having previously turned their coats inside out. I went this morning, to inspect the hole, which is still appropriated to the same use of a common-sewer, and has undergone no alteration, except that over it is now laid a grating of iron. But, instructed by experience, a Russian sentinel mounts guard perpetually on the spot, to prevent any repetition of the experiment. It is indeed, matter of surprize, that such a place should ever have escaped observation.

Charlot having entered the sewer first, his companions followed singly, it not admitting more than one abreast. After wading for some way, up to their armpits, they effected their object; and as every instant was precious, they began by dispatching the sentinel, posted at the place where they got out of the sewer. The

futler

futler having joined them, Charlot, with about fifteen of his followers, hastened to the Lieutenant's apartment, which he entered sword in hand. Waking with the noise, the Russian officer instantly discharged a loaded pistol at him, the ball of which broke his thigh. He staggered back, and supported himself against the wall, while his companions dispatched the Lieutenant. They then proceeded to put to the sword, or to secure, the remaining part of the garrison; while others, without losing a moment, opened a little postern gate, at which Choisy entered, with his troop of two hundred and seventy.

Being now completely masters of the Castle, Choisy left a small number of men to guard it, and sallied out into the city, at the head of the remainder. So admirably had the enterprize been executed, and with so little noise or disturbance was it attended, that the Russian forces quartered in Cracow, were perfectly unapprehensive of danger, as well as unprepared for resistance.

ance. According to the plan concerted between Choisy and the Chiefs of the confederate Poles, it was settled, that as soon as he had got entire possession of the fortrefs, he should without delay attack the Muscovite soldiery posted in the town. On their part, the Confederates engaged to make themselves masters of two gates, than which nothing could be more easy; and to fall upon the enemy in the rear, who would thus have been enclosed between two fires.

Choisy fulfilled his part of the agreement, with equal punctuality and success. He even advanced with so much silence and secrecy, through the streets of Cracow, that he got within fifty paces of the grand guard, before he was either perceived or discovered. The Russians then beat to arms, and repulsed his little troop. Under these circumstances, totally unsupported, he nevertheless sustained the action for more than two hours, continually retreating, in momentary expectation of being succoured by the confederate forces; but, none appeared.

peared. On the contrary, with unparalleled pusillanimity, they retired without making any effort, and abandoned him to his fate. Thus deserted, and overpowered by numbers, Choisy fell back, regained the Castle, and shut the gates on the enemy. Though destitute of all assistance, he defended himself with no less bravery than skill. It became necessary to march troops from Warsaw, to the aid of those at Cracow, and the united forces did not fall short of four thousand. Near nine hundred Russians perished in the various assaults, given during the course of the siege; and it was not till near five months after the surprize of the Castle, that the besieged, having totally exhausted their ammunition and provisions, were under the necessity of submitting at discretion. They were sent into Siberia, according to the laudable principles of Catharine's policy, in order to deter others from following their example. Choisy himself was not exempted from so rigorous a punishment. Charlot being rendered

rendered incapable of walking by reason of his wound, remained a prisoner in the hands of the Russians. It is with pleasure I add, that both those gallant, but unfortunate gentlemen, together with some others of the French taken in the Castle of Cracow, have since been permitted to return to their native country.

Thus terminated an attempt, which, had it been properly sustained, might have had great and important consequences: perhaps, might have at least delayed, if not averted, the partition of the kingdom, that took place immediately afterwards. But, the Poles, though enthusiastic in their efforts to maintain, or to recover the independence of their country, have always been deficient in judgment, desultory in their conduct, and precipitate in their projects. To these characteristic defects, may in great measure be attributed their destruction. Before I quit the subject of Cracow, I shall subjoin the fate of the sutler who introduced Charlot into the Castle, which is not the least

least tragical or interesting part of the narration. No sooner had Choisy got possession of the fortrefs, than his first care was to send the man away, after rewarding him with a hundred ducats, and enjoining him instantly to leave Poland. The sutler obeyed, and in a few hours reached Billitz, the first town in Austrian Silesia, where he might have remained in perfect safety. His wife and two children were preparing to follow him. But, after some stay at Billitz, he had the imprudence to return to Cracow in disguise, having persuaded himself that the Russians would not discover him. Being soon recognized, he was condemned to the punishment of the "Batogs;" a mode of execution common in Muscovy, which is inflicted by flogging or striking the criminal on the back with a thong, in which is contained a piece of lead. Under this sentence he expired, the victim of his own folly and temerity, on the very spot where Charlot had been admitted into the Castle.

I returned

I returned yesterday from visiting the salt mines of Wielicza, situate two leagues off, on the southern side of the Vistula. After being let down by a rope, as in those of Cremnitz, to the depth of about two hundred and thirty feet; our conductors led us through galleries, which, for loftiness and breadth, seemed rather to resemble the avenues to some subterranean Palace, than passages cut in a mine. They were perfectly dry in every part, and terminated in two chapels composed entirely of salt, hewn out of the solid mass. The images which adorn the altars, as well as the pillars and ornaments, were all of the same transparent materials; the points and spars of which, reflecting the rays of light from the lamps which the guides held in their hands, produced an effect equally novel and beautiful. Descending lower into the earth by means of ladders, I found myself in an immense hall or cavern of salt, many hundred feet in height, length, and dimensions, the floor and sides of which were cut with exact regularity.

gularity. A thousand persons might dine in it without inconvenience, and the eye in vain attempted to trace, or to define its limits. Nothing could be more sublime than this vast subterranean apartment, illuminated by flambeaux, which faintly discover its prodigious magnitude, and leave the imagination at liberty to enlarge it indefinitely. After remaining about two hours and a half under ground, I was drawn up again in three minutes, with the greatest facility.

The mines of Wielicza, if considered as objects of curiosity, afforded me higher gratification than any which I have visited in Europe. They have been already worked above five hundred years, and appear to be inexhaustible; more salt being found in them than can possibly be sold, though they supply all Poland with their produce. It is scarcely mixed with any extraneous, metallic, or earthy particles, in the places where the workmen principally dig. They have in fact little more trouble than merely to

to collect, pound, and put it into barrels. Only four hundred and thirty-five men are employed at this time; but in winter they amount to double the number. At Vielicza, as in Hungary, they never sleep below; the horses alone, about fifty of which are usually in employment, remaining constantly under ground. No woman is allowed to descend into the mines; a regulation of great propriety. All the Intendants and Overseers are Germans: the miners are universally natives of Poland. They enter at four o'clock in the morning, and continue till the same hour in the afternoon, when they are drawn up and relieved by others. In depth, the mines of Vielicza fall far short of those at Schemnitz, being no where above twelve hundred feet below the surface of the earth. But, they are in every respect far easier of access; and the air, which I found so oppressive in the Hungarian, was cool and pleasant in the Polish mines.

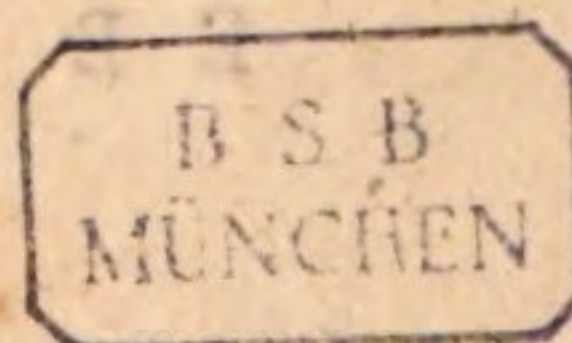
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Their loss to the Republic is not to be estimated ; and as they constituted a chief source of the royal revenues, having always been part of the domain of the Crown, the present King must doubly feel the defalcation of such a source of national wealth. Maria Theresa and her son seem to be fully aware of the value, as well as importance of the acquisition. Vielicza fell to their share, in the memorable partition of this country, six years ago. Every precaution is now taking, in order to secure it ; not against the Confederates ; for those miserable combinations are completely quelled, and Poland, from one extremity to the other, is subjugated under the Russian despotism : but the Court of Vienna justly dreads a more formidable enemy. Cracow and Vielicza are not far removed from the frontiers of Silesia ; and Frederic, whose attention is ever active, may easily make an irruption into Poland. The Vistula would form no sufficient barrier against his inroads. Batteries are therefore erecting, “ Chevaux

de Frise" are already placed, and a body of troops is stationed, for the protection of the mines. Time will shew whether these measures are sufficient for their effectual safety and preservation.

My next letter will be from Warsaw, for which city I shall set out to-morrow.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



B.C. AN-OMP 578



Wraxall, Nathaniel William,

Memoirs of the courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, and Vienna, in the years
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